



NEWS

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Contact:
Ivi Mendez
850.222.1996

El Niño's Return Impacts 2009 Hurricane Season

~ El Niño is expected to reduce the severity of the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season, but there is concern this will lead to an even less-prepared public ~

Tallahassee, Fla.—The global weather system El Niño is back, but contrary to popular belief, it is not all bad. This time, El Niño actually may stifle the development of more hurricanes over the Atlantic, leading to an altogether less severe hurricane season. However, the [National Hurricane Survival Initiative](#) (NHSI) warns this does not diminish the importance of being prepared when a hurricane does hit.

“The NHSI is urging people not to let down their guard,” said [Ron Sachs](#), executive producer for NHSI. “It only takes one hurricane with your town in its path to make this a very bad hurricane season.”

According to NOAA, El Niño is a fluctuation of the ocean atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific. Effects of the variation include more rainfall across the southern tier of the U.S. and in Peru, potentially leading to destructive flooding and droughts in the West Pacific. Sometimes, it is associated with devastating brush fires.

The NHSI is concerned that news of El Niño's potentially calming effect on hurricane season will lure people into a false sense of complacency and security, leaving the public unprepared when hurricanes actually do hit, potentially causing preventable injury and damage. In fact, El Niño last occurred in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew, a category 5 storm, devastated much of Miami-Dade County in Florida. The storm was responsible for 65 deaths and \$26.5 billion in damages in 1992, which translates to \$41.3 billion in today's standards.

There are many things to consider when preparing for hurricane season, from disaster plans and hurricane survival kits to reviewing insurance coverage for homes and businesses.

“The aftermath of hurricanes can be almost as disastrous as the storms themselves,” said [Ray Stone](#), vice president of catastrophe operations for Travelers. “Homes are destroyed, property is gone. Don’t wait until after a storm to review your coverage.”

The NHSI is a public education and safety outreach campaign, developed in partnership with the [National Hurricane Center](#), the [National Emergency Management Association](#), [The Salvation Army](#) and the [International Hurricane Research Center at Florida International University](#). Corporate partners include [Travelers](#) and [Plylox](#). The project is produced by Ron Sachs Communications, in cooperation with CoreMessage.

For detailed information on preparing for a hurricane, go to the National Hurricane Survival Initiative’s Web site at: <http://www.hurricanesafety.org>.

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