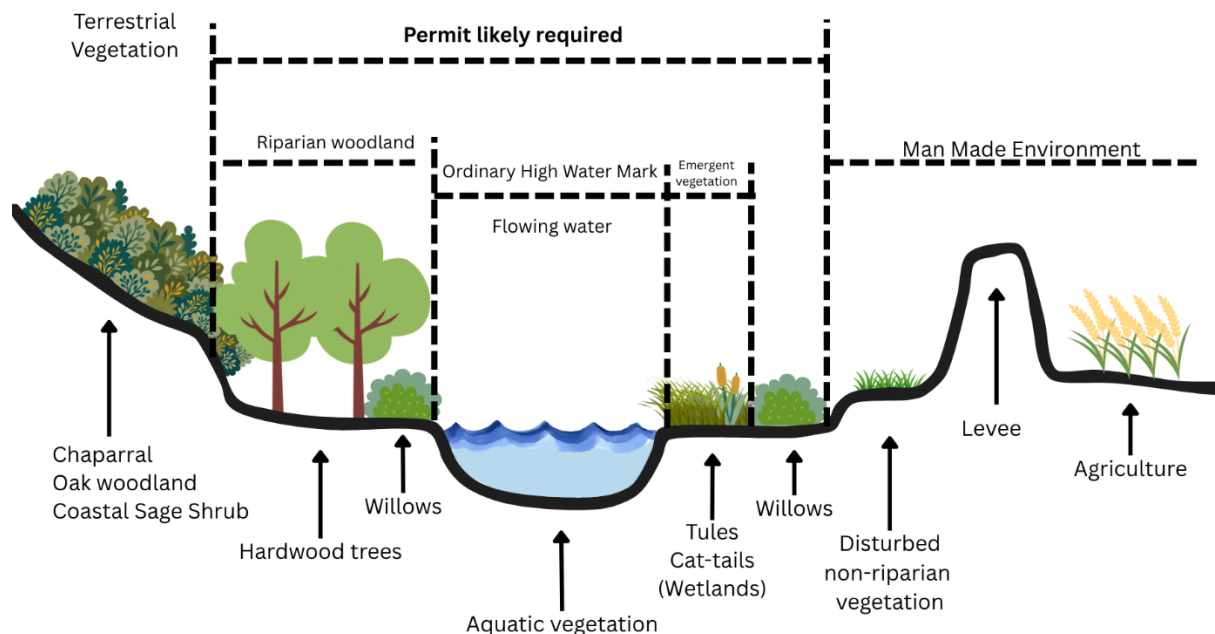


2026 EMERGENCY PROJECT PERMITTING INFORMATION
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region
October 13, 2026

A State of Emergency has been declared in California to support preparation for likely El Niño storms this coming winter. Work conducted within waterbodies to prepare for El Niño storms is eligible for emergency permitting. Such work includes flood management infrastructure repairs, vegetation management, debris removal, sediment management, bridge scour protection, and channel-capacity improvements. In addition, work conducted within waterbodies responding to emergency situations caused by El Niño storms will also be eligible for emergency permitting. This document explains how the Central Coast Water Board issues permits for emergency work within waterbodies.

Determining the Need for a Permit

The Central Coast Water Board regulates projects occurring within waterbodies such as rivers, creeks, lakes, wetlands, bays, ocean waters, and riparian areas. Any project moving, placing, or discharging material such as soil, rock, concrete, or cut vegetation within waterbodies and riparian areas will likely require a permit from the Central Coast Water Board. Please see the chart below to help identify areas of work where a permit will likely be needed:



Please contact Central Coast Water Board staff to determine if a permit is needed for your project:

Table 1 Regional Contacts

Staff	Area of Responsibility	Phone	Email
Natalie Mayer	Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties	805-542-4787	Natalie.Mayer@waterboards.ca.gov
Julia Hill	Monterey County	805-594-6163	Julia.Hill@waterboards.ca.gov
Alia Ajina	Caltrans, Northern Santa Barbara County	805-542-4646	Alia.Ajina@waterboards.ca.gov
Allie Mortensen	Southern and Coastal San Luis Obispo County	805-542-4627	Allie.Mortensen@waterboards.ca.gov
April Woods	Southern Santa Barbara County	805-549-3332	April.Woods@waterboards.ca.gov
Meg Perry	Northern San Luis Obispo County, Santa Clara County, San Benito County	805-542-4781	Margaret.Perry@waterboards.ca.gov
Ali Coblentz	Utilities	805-542-4786	Alexandra.Coblentz@waterboards.ca.gov

Applying for a Permit

Work within waterbodies and riparian areas requires a permit from the Central Coast Water Board. Emergency situations allow for expedited notification and permitting, as follows:

- The Central Coast Water Board issues expedited emergency permits for projects addressing emergency situations that meet the following definition:
 - *“A sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services.”*
 - Projects preparing for El Nino storms are also eligible for emergency permitting.
- If a project qualifies for emergency permitting, the project proponent should submit an emergency permitting application as soon as possible (application information below).
 - Central Coast Water Board must be notified **at least 48 hours** prior to initiating the emergency project.
 - Notification should occur by submitting an emergency permit application, but may also occur by telephone, e-mail, written notice, or other verifiable means.
 - If 48-hour prior notice to the Central Coast Water Board is not possible due to an emergency situation requiring immediate action,

then the project proponent must notify the Central Coast Water Board within **one business day** of initiation of the emergency project.

- If an application was not submitted with a notification, the application must be submitted as soon as possible.
- **Initiating project work within waters before a permit is issued is only allowed for emergency situations requiring immediate action.** If the project does not meet the definition of an emergency, the project is not eligible for an emergency permit and will need to go through the standard permitting process.

Choosing the Right Permit

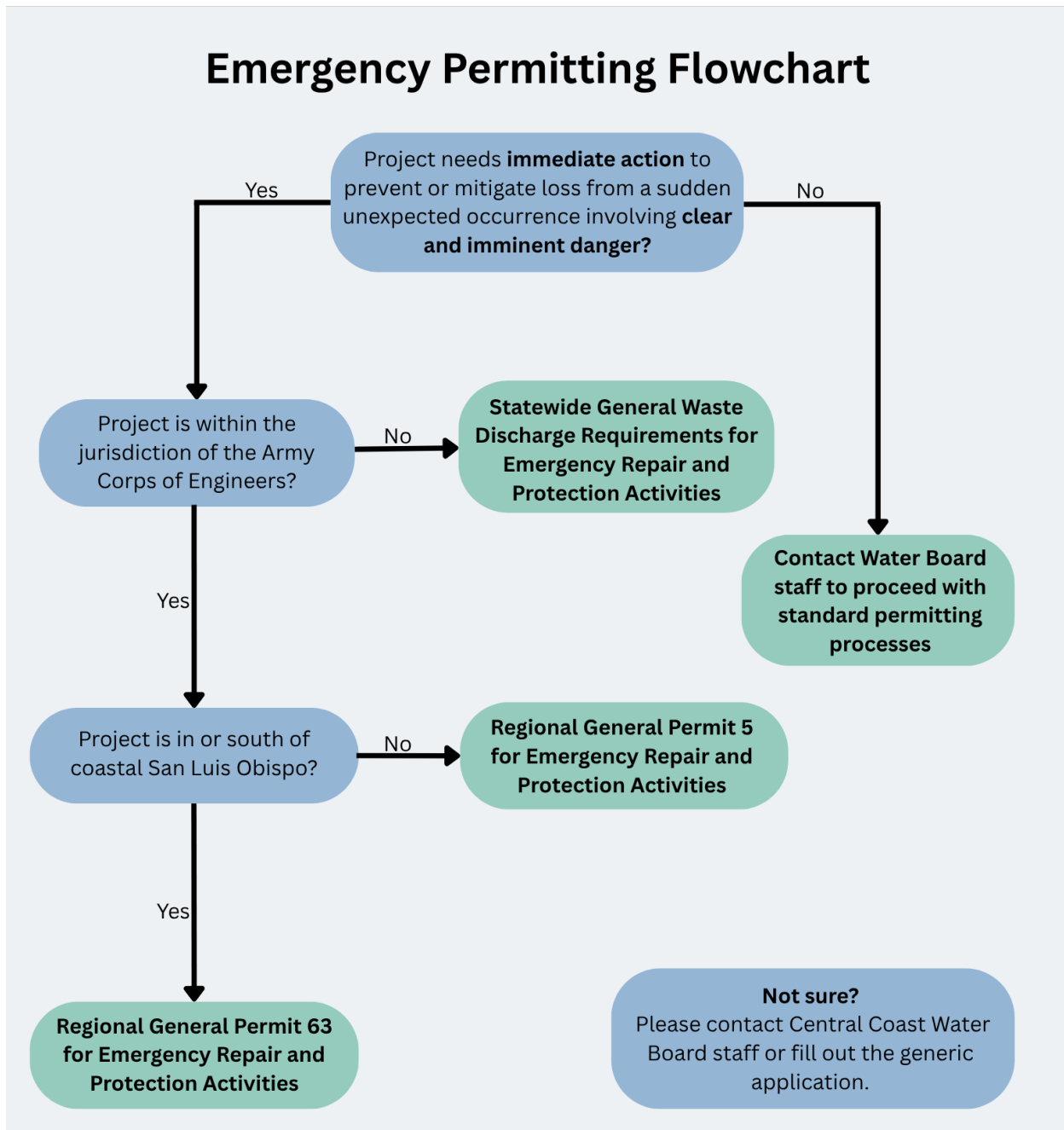
First contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to determine if a federal permit is required for work in waters of the United States, then review the flow chart and supporting information below to identify the appropriate permit (in green on the flowchart). Links to each permit are provided below. Information on Corps federal permitting and contacts is available here:

- Coastal San Luis Obispo County and further south (Corps Los Angeles District)
 - o <https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/missions/regulatory/>
- Northern San Luis Obispo County and further north (Corps San Francisco District)
 - o <https://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/>

OR

If you are unfamiliar with Central Coast Water Board permitting and unsure of the correct permit to apply for after reviewing the information below, you can fill out and submit this general emergency permit application and Central Coast Water Board staff will then assist with identifying the correct permit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/401wqcert/docs/2026/storm-response-emergency-app.docx



If the Corps takes jurisdiction and requires a permit for the project, use the links below to apply for a permit (called 401 Certifications):

- The project is in Coastal San Luis Obispo County or further south (401 Certification of Regional General Permit 63 (Corps Los Angeles District))
 - Requirements: [Permit for Emergency Projects Subject to Corps Regional General Permit 63](#)

- Application: [Application \(Notice of Intent\) for Permit for Emergency Projects Subject to Corps Regional General Permit 63](#)
- The project is in Northern San Luis Obispo County or further north (401 Certification of Regional General Permit 5 (Corps San Francisco District))
 - Requirements: [Permit for Emergency Projects Subject to Corps Regional General Permit 5](#)
 - Application: [Application \(Notice of Intent\) for Permit for Emergency Projects Subject to Corps Regional General Permit 5](#)

If the Corps is not issuing a permit and the project is occurring in state waters, use this link to the emergency permit for projects within state waters:

- Requirements: [Permit for Emergency Projects in Waters of the State](#)
- Application: [Application \(Notice of Intent\) for Permit for Emergency Projects in Waters of the State](#)

Emergency Permitting Process

Once the correct permit is identified, submit your application, known as a Notice of Intent. The following is a description of the steps for permit issuance and oversight. An emergency permit is called a Notice of Applicability and will issued by email.

Steps for Emergency Permits

1. Submit the application (Notice of Intent) to the Central Coast Water Board regional contact identified in Table 1 and to the following email address: rb3-401Application@waterboards.ca.gov
2. Central Coast Water Board staff review
3. Receive emergency permit (Notice of Applicability)
4. Conduct emergency work in accordance with permit
5. Restore and mitigate impacts to waterbodies and riparian areas, if required
6. Monitor and report, if required
7. Submit a Notice of Completion to the Central Coast Water Board regional contact identified in Table 1 to terminate permit coverage