

SEVERE WEATHER

Make sure your family and home are ready in case severe weather strikes. Knowing safety tips and having severe weather plans in place are the best way to prepare.

DEFINITIONS: (source [CNY](#))

Watch – means a “chance” this condition will happen and usually covers a large geographical area for a lengthy time period.

Advisory – is sort of in between a WATCH and WARNING. The expected weather condition has a pretty good chance of occurring, even a likely chance of occurring, but typically an advisory is used for “less” severe type of weather conditions. A Wind Advisory might be issued or a Freezing Rain Advisory issued instead of a High Wind Warning or an ice Storm Warning.

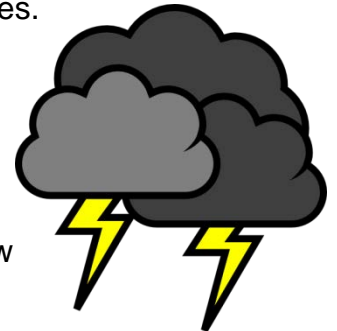
Warning – means the said weather is already occurring or is likely to occur and to take proper protective measures. Warnings are usually issued for much smaller geographical areas and usually for shorter, more definite time periods.



THUNDER STORMS AND LIGHTNING: (source: [CDC](#))

OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

- **Be aware.** Check the weather forecast before participating in outdoor activities.
- **When thunder roars, go indoors.** Find a safe, enclosed shelter such as a home, office, shopping center, or hard-top vehicle with the windows rolled up.
- **Crouch close to the ground and separate.**
 - ◇ If you are caught in an open area, crouch down in a ball-like position with your head tucked and hands over your ears so that you are down low with minimal contact with the ground. Do not lie down – lightning causes electric currents along the top of the ground.
 - ◇ If you are in a group during a thunderstorm, separate from each other. This will reduce the number of injuries if lightning strikes the ground.
- Do not stay in open vehicles, structures, and spaces. Avoid tall structures.



INDOOR SAFETY TIPS

- **Avoid water.** Do NOT bathe, shower, wash dishes, or have any contact with water during a thunderstorm because lightning can travel through a building’s plumbing.
- **Avoid electronic equipment.** Do NOT use your computers, laptops, game systems, washers, dryers, stoves, or anything connected to an electrical outlet. Lightning can travel through electrical systems.
- **Avoid corded phones.** However, it is safe to use cordless or cellular phones during a storm.
- **Avoid windows, doors, porches, and concrete.** Do NOT lie on concrete floors during a thunderstorm. Also, avoid leaning on concrete walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring.

TORNADOES:

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard. Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible. Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.



Tornado Preparations and Response

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information. In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Look for approaching storms.
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - Dark, often greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.
 - If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.
- **If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately! Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head.**
- Go to a pre-designated area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of a small interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway), away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- In a high-rise building, go to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- If you are caught outside with no shelter: Lie in an area noticeably lower than the level of the roadway and cover your head with your arms and a blanket, coat or other cushion if possible.
- If you are in a manufactured (mobile) home or office: Get out immediately and go to a pre-identified location such as the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.



Emergency Management

POLICE DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

MORE INFORMATION

Water.weather.gov - River height/stream gauges

Noaa.gov - Weather forecasts for your area

Federal Emergency Management Agency – Tornado preparedness