

# Thunderstorms

**EVEN WHEN THEY'RE SMALL, ALL THUNDERSTORMS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS. EVERY THUNDERSTORM PRODUCES LIGHTNING, A CAUSE OF MORE DEATHS EACH YEAR THAN TORNADOES, AND HEAVY RAIN CAN LEAD TO FLASH FLOODING.**

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

- Make a list of items to bring inside.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed.
- Remove any debris or loose items in your yard.
- Consider installing permanent shutters to cover windows.
- Install lightning rods.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE A THUNDERSTORM

- Use NOAA Weather Radio with a tone alert feature to keep yourself informed.
- If planning a trip, listen to the latest forecasts and take necessary action.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent.
- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, lightning flashes, increasing wind—signs of an approaching storm.

# Tornadoes

**ONE OF NATURE'S MOST AWESOME DISPLAYS OF POWER, AN ADVANCING TORNADO ALLOWS LITTLE TIME TO MAKE LIFE-OR-DEATH DECISIONS. YOUR SURVIVAL MAY DEPEND ON YOUR QUICK RESPONSE AND ADVANCE PLANNING.**

## PREPARE A HOME TORNADO PLAN

Pick a place for family members to gather: a basement, or center hallway, bathroom or closet on the lowest floor. Make a plan for getting back together if adults are at work and children are at school. Choose an out-of-town friend or relative as a family contact and commit your contact's phone number to memory—after a disaster it's often easier to call long distance.

**Know the difference between a tornado WATCH and a tornado WARNING:**

- A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible in your area.
- A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed your way. Go to safety immediately.

- Stay aware of your surroundings. Look for places you might go should severe weather threaten.
- Listen for the sound of thunder. If you hear thunder, you may be close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning, so go to safe shelter immediately.

## WHAT TO DO DURING A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, or local radio and television stations for updated information.
- Avoid natural lightning rods such as golf clubs, fishing poles, bicycles and camping equipment.
- Be prepared to seek shelter.

## IF YOU PERCEIVE A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM APPROACHING

- Secure outdoor objects.
- Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones.
- Avoid bathtubs, water faucets and sinks, because metal pipes can transmit electricity.

## ESTIMATING DISTANCE FROM A THUNDERSTORM

- Count the number of seconds between lightning flashes and thunder claps. Divide by five for the number of miles.
- Know that whenever you hear thunder, you can be struck by lightning, regardless of distance from the approaching storm.

## SIGNS OF AN APPROACHING TORNADO

Tornadoes are especially dangerous because they arrive so unexpectedly, allowing little time to respond. If you're out of doors, be alert to:

- An oddly greenish or greenish-black cast to the skies.
- Debris dropping from the sky, or an approaching cloud of debris, such as twigs and leaves, being pulled upward.
- Unusual quiet and stillness occurring during or immediately after a thunderstorm.
- The fall of hail in connection with any of the other signs described above.
- A gradually increasing roaring sound not unlike that of a jet airplane or railroad train.

## WHEN A TORNADO WATCH IS ISSUED...

- Listen to local radio and TV stations for further updates.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions.

## WHEN A TORNADO WARNING IS ISSUED...

- If you are inside, go to the safe place you selected.
- If you are outside or in a mobile home, hurry to the basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.

## WHAT TO DO AT HOME DURING A THUNDERSTORM WARNING

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or a battery-operated radio or television for updates.
- Draw blinds and shades over windows.
- Unplug appliances.
- Avoid taking a bath/shower or running water.
- Turn off the air conditioner.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE OUTSIDE

- If you feel your hair standing on end, lightning is about to strike. Remove metal objects from your person. Crouch low with feet together and hands on knees. Do not lie flat!
- If boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter.
- Take shelter in reinforced buildings or in a car.
- If you are in the woods, find an area protected by a low clump of trees.
- If you are in an open space without any structures, such as a field or golf course, crouch low with hands on knees.
- Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees or fences, and avoid telephone and power lines.

## IF YOU'RE IN A VEHICLE...

- Never attempt to outride a tornado. Tornadoes change direction quickly and unpredictably.
- Get out of your vehicle immediately. Vehicles do not provide safe shelter and are easily picked up and thrown by the force of a tornado.
- If there is no time to find shelter, get out of your vehicle and lie flat in a ditch or low area as far from your vehicle as possible.

## AFTER THE TORNADO PASSES...

- Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage.
- Do not use candles at any time.
- Check on the elderly and your pets.
- Take pictures of your damaged property for insurance claims.
- Inspect utilities. If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound, evacuate immediately. If you see sparks or damaged wires, turn off electricity at the fuse box or circuit breaker.

## WHAT TO DO WHILE DRIVING DURING A THUNDERSTORM

- Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road. Make sure you are away from trees or other tall objects.
- Avoid contact with metal or conductive surfaces outside or inside the vehicle.
- Avoid flooded roadways.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER A THUNDERSTORM

- Continue listening to local radio or television stations for updated information.
- Help a neighbor who may require special assistance.
- Stay away from storm-damaged areas.
- Watch out for fallen power lines and report them immediately.

## WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

- Call for help.
- Give first aid.
- Check for burns, which may occur in two places: the point at which the lightning struck and the point at which the electricity exited the body.

## ASSEMBLE A DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT CONTAINING...

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least one gallon of water per person, per day.
- Protective clothing, bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Credit cards and cash.
- Cellular phone.
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so.



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### Emergency Phone Numbers

American Red Cross \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company \_\_\_\_\_

Relative or friend \_\_\_\_\_

True Value Store \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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