



# Emergency Preparedness

## THUNDERSTORMS AND TORNADOES

### During a Thunderstorm

#### If indoors

- First, check the outside area of your property.
- Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture that could blow away or cause damage or injury. Take light objects inside.
- Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.
- Listen to battery operated radio or television for the latest storm information
- Do not handle electrical equipment. Avoid telephones. Television sets are particularly dangerous at this time.
- Avoid bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity.

#### If outdoors

- Attempt to get into a building or car.
- If no structure is available, get to an open space and squat low to the ground as quickly as possible. (If in the woods, find an area protected by a low clump of trees—never stand underneath a single large tree in the open.) Be aware of the potential for flooding in low-lying areas.
- Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees, fences, telephone lines, or power lines.
- Stay away from natural lightning rods such as golf clubs, tractors, fishing rods, bicycles, or camping equipment.
- Stay away from rivers, lakes or other bodies of water.
- If you are isolated in a level field or prairie and you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike), drop to your knees and bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. Do not lie flat on the ground.

#### If in a car

- Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road away from any trees that could fall on the vehicle.
- Stay in the car and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rains subside.
- Avoid flooded roadways.

### After a Thunderstorm

#### Check for injuries

A person who has been struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge that can shock other people. If the victim is burned, provide first aid and call emergency medical assistance immediately [911]. Look for burns where lightning entered and exited the body. If the strike causes the victim's heart and breathing to stop, give cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until medical professionals arrive and take over.

Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance—infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities. Report downed utility wires. [544-6500]

### Tornado Watches & Warnings

*A **tornado watch** indicates that weather conditions may cause tornadoes to develop in an area.*

A tornado watch does not mean that a tornado has been sighted. The watch may cover time periods of up to 8 hours. People within the area should be prepared for possible tornadoes.

Residents of the designated area need not seek shelter or disrupt their normal routine during the tornado watch, but they should tune in to radio or TV and be alert for threatening weather conditions.

*A **tornado warning** is issued by local weather bureau offices when a tornado funnel has actually been sighted or indicated by radar.*

The tornado warning covers a short period of time and specific small areas. The warning will indicate where the tornado was detected and the area through which it is expected to move. A tornado warning means that persons in the expected path of the storm should take shelter immediately.

Source: Thunderstorms & Lightning—Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); Source: Tornadoes—University of Florida (Fact Sheet DH 22, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Publication Date: June 1993; Source: Storm Recovery Tips for Trees—National Arbor Day Foundation's "Storm Recovery—Trees" media kit.



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### During a Tornado

Knowing what to do during a tornado may mean the difference between life and death. If you hear a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately. Stay away from windows.

#### If at work

In office buildings, go to an interior hallway on a lower floor, preferably in the basement, or designated shelter area.

In factories, go to the section of the plant offering the greatest protection. Someone should be responsible for disconnecting fuel lines and electric circuits. Keep a lookout posted.

#### If at home

In homes, go to a storm cellar, underground excavation, or to the southwest corner of the basement. Get under sturdy furniture, if possible. If you have no basement, choose an inside way away from windows and lie flat against it. Central halls, bathrooms, and closets are good places. Get under heavy furniture, if possible, to protect yourself from flying glass and debris. Then, stay away from windows. Keep tuned to a battery-powered radio for latest weather information.

#### If in a mobile home

In mobile homes, go to the nearest community shelter or another sturdy building, if possible. Mobile homes are especially dangerous during high winds and may be overturned. All mobile homes should be tied down.

#### If at school

In schools, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor. Avoid gymnasiums and other structures with large, free-span roofs.

### Safety Tips for Before, During, and After a Flash Flood

Do not walk through flowing water  
Do not drive through a flooded area.  
Look out for animals, especially snakes.

Stay away from power and electrical lines.

Have the electricity turned off.

Be alert for gas leaks (use a flash light to inspect for damage).

### Additional actions that aid in reducing personal risks and property damage

Electrical panel boxes, water heaters, washers, and dryers should be elevated or relocated to a location less likely to be flooded.

Move essential items and furniture to the upper floors of your home.

Keep materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing.

### Keep in Touch

In case family members are separated from one another during bad weather (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

### Storm Recovery Tips for Trees

**Safety First**—Beware of utility lines and hazardous overhanging limbs.

**Be Patient**—If a tree does not represent a hazard take the time necessary to be sure it gets proper care and make a final decision about it in a few weeks or months.

**Hire a Qualified Arborist**—If a tree is large, requires high climbing, is leaning against wires, buildings or other trees, or if wires or structures are endangered, let a professional do the job.

**Take Heart**—Trees are amazingly resilient, and the trees of other communities have recovered over time.

Contact City Hall (867-2717), Natural Resources Department, for more information on what to do with your trees after a storm.

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