



101 Critical Days of Summer

Safety Tip #11 – Severe Weather



Americans live in the most severe weather-prone country on Earth. Each year, Americans cope with an average of 10,000 thunderstorms, 5,000 floods, 1,000 tornadoes, and an average of 2 land falling deadly hurricanes. And this on top of winter storms, intense summer heat, high winds, wild fires and other deadly weather impacts.

Some 90% of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage.

Here are a few tips that will help you on a stormy day....

Flash Flood Safety - Do you know what to do if you see water crossing over a roadway?

Flash flood safety rules:

If In A Vehicle:

- **DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOODED AREAS!** Even if it looks shallow enough to cross. The large majority of deaths due to flash flooding are due to people driving through flooded areas. Water only one foot deep can displace 1500 lbs! Two feet of water can EASILY carry most automobiles! Roadways concealed by floodwaters may not be intact, as the picture below shows the aftermath of a flood.



When Inside:

- If ordered to evacuate or if rising water is threatening, leave immediately and get to higher ground!

If Caught Outdoors:

- Go to higher ground immediately! Avoid small rivers or streams, low spots, canyons, dry riverbeds, etc.
- Do not try to walk through flowing water more than ankle deep!
- Do not allow children to play around streams, drainage ditches or viaducts, storm drains, or other flooded areas!

Lightning Safety - Do you know what to do if you are caught in the open during a thunderstorm or you feel tingling or your hair standing on end?

Lightning causes around 100 deaths in the U.S. annually (more than hurricanes and tornadoes combined). In the picture above, the young woman and her friends were severely injured by lightning just a few seconds after this picture was taken. Notice that no rain was falling, clearly illustrating that lightning can strike up to several miles away from the thunderstorm.

General lightning safety rules:

When Inside:

- Avoid using the telephone (except for emergencies) or other electrical appliances.
- Do not take a bath or shower.

If Caught Outdoors:

- Go to a safe shelter immediately! Such as inside a sturdy building. A hard top automobile with the windows up can also offer fair protection.
- If you are boating or swimming, get out of the water immediately and move to a safe shelter away from the water!
- If you are in a wooded area, seek shelter under a thick growth of relatively small trees.
- **Avoid:** isolated trees or other tall objects, bodies of water, sheds, fences, convertible automobiles, tractors, and motorcycles.



Check out some of these sites.....

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/index.shtml>

http://www.weather.com/ready/severeweatherprep.html?from=WXReadywelcome_h1



Tornado Safety - If a tornado was approaching, would you know what to do?

Tornadoes are the most violent atmospheric phenomenon on the planet. Winds of 200-300 mph can occur with the most violent tornadoes. The following are instructions on what to do when a tornado warning has been issued for your area or whenever a tornado threatens:

In Homes or Small Buildings:

- Go to the basement (if available) or to an interior room on the lowest floor, such as a closet or bathroom. Wrap yourself in overcoats or blankets to protect yourself from flying debris.

In Schools, Hospitals, Factories, or Shopping Centers:

- Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums and warehouses. Crouch down and cover your head.

In High-Rise Buildings:

- Go to interior small rooms or halls. Stay away from exterior walls or glassy areas.

In Cars or Mobile Homes:

- **ABANDON THEM IMMEDIATELY!!** Most deaths occur in cars and mobile homes. If you are in either of those locations, leave them and go to a substantial structure or designated tornado shelter.

If No Suitable Structure is Nearby:

- Lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head.



Heat and Humidity – Are you safe?

While thunderstorms and flash floods usually get the most attention when it comes to dangerous weather in our area, summertime heat and humidity are also threats that we need to be aware of. Heat kills by taxing the human body beyond its abilities. We want you to know about the dangers of excessive heat and humidity, and things you can do to stay safe. As with any hazardous weather safety plan, the first step is staying informed. Pay attention to forecasts and statements from your local National Weather Service Forecast Office, and information from local agencies.

It has been said that "It's not the heat, it's the humidity". Well, **actually it's both.**



Heat and Humidity Safety Tips

Slow down. Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated, or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day. Individuals at risk should stay in the coolest available place, not necessarily indoors.

Dress for summer. Lightweight light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight, and helps your body maintain normal temperatures.

Put less fuel on your inner fires. Foods (like proteins) that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.

Drink plenty of **water or other non-alcohol fluids**. Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Persons who (1) have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, (2) are on fluid restrictive diets or (3) have a problem with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their consumption of fluids.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages.

Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician. Persons on salt restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.

Spend more time in air-conditioned places. **Air conditioning** in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spending some time each day (during hot weather) in an air conditioned environment affords some protection.

Don't get too much sun. Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.

Check out some of these sites too.....

<http://www.hitmill.com/roads/severe.html>

<http://www.weather.gov/om/severeweather/index.shtml>

Your Risk Management Staff

This document was derived from multiple sources. Sources are available upon request in the 157 ARW/SE Office.