

# Severe Weather: Know What To Do

Environmental & Occupational Safety



## What is Severe Weather?

Severe weather is any destructive weather phenomenon. The term is usually used to refer to severe thunderstorms and related weather, such as tornados, hail, and downbursts. Severe weather can also refer to snowstorms, ice storms, blizzards, flooding, hurricanes, and high winds.

In its broadest sense, the term "severe weather" is defined as any aspect of the weather which can "pose a threat to life and property". This can include phenomena such as tropical cyclones, wind storms, heat waves, and severe thunderstorms.



As we enter into Hurricane Season, which begins June 1st and lasts through November 30th, the likelihood that we will experience severe weather, specifically thunderstorms, greatly increases. Please take a few moments to become informed on how to be prepared for severe weather, which can happen any time, any place.

## Thunderstorms

A thunderstorm is a storm with lightning and thunder. Thunderstorms can occur year-round at any time. They are most likely to happen in the spring and summer months and during the afternoon and evening hours.

Before the lightning strikes...

- ☁️ Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing wind.
- ☁️ Listen for the sound of thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.



## Thunderstorms Continued

### When a Storm Approaches...

- ☁ Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- ☁ Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. (Leaving electric lights on, however, does not increase the chances of your home being struck by lightning.)
- ☁ Avoid taking a bath or shower, or running water for any other purpose.
- ☁ Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor, resulting in a costly repair job!
- ☁ Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

### If Caught Outside...

- ☁ If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.
- ☁ If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately!



### Protecting Yourself Outside...

- ☁ Go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- ☁ Be a very small target! Squat low to the ground. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible.
- ☁ Do not lie flat on the ground--this will make you a larger target!

### If Someone is Struck by Lightning...

- ☁ People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- ☁ Call for help. Get someone to dial University Police at 259-5555 or the local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number (911)
- ☁ The injured person has received an electrical shock and may be burned, both where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Check for burns in both places. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight.
- ☁ Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, look and care for other possible injuries.

