Thunderstorm

Preparedness Checklist

Thunderstorms are dangerous storms with lightning. A lightning strike can kill you. Thunderstorms often bring:
- Powerful winds that can knock down trees, power lines, and mobile homes
- Intense rainfall that causes flash floods
- Tornadoes
- Lightning strikes that can spark fires
- Damaging hail

But we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home.

**What to Do: Before**

**Identify a Sturdy Building and Practice Drills**
- You need to get inside a sturdy building before a thunderstorm hits. A sturdy building is a structure with walls and a foundation. Once you have identified a sturdy building, plan to shelter in the basement or a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level to provide additional protection from high winds. Plan to stay inside until weather forecasts indicate it is safe to leave.
- Mobile, manufactured, trailer homes, and recreational vehicles (RVs) are not safe in high winds. If you live in one of these structures, you need to identify a sturdy building nearby that you can get to quickly.
- Practice drills with everyone in your household, so everyone knows where to go and what to do before a thunderstorm hits.

**Plan to Stay Connected**
- Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.
- Monitor local weather and news.
- Have a plan to keep your phone charged.
- In case of a power outage have a battery-powered radio.
- Understand the types of alerts that you may receive and have a plan to respond:
  - A WATCH means **Be Prepared!**
  - A WARNING means **Take Action!**

**Learn Emergency Skills**
- Learn First Aid and CPR.
- Utilities may be offline. Be prepared to live without power, gas, and water. Plan for your electrical needs, including cell phones and medical equipment.

**Protect Your Home**
- Make a list of items outside your home you will need to tie down or put away so that they don’t blow away or fly through a window during high winds. When a High Wind, Severe Thunderstorm, or Tornado Watch, is issued, immediately secure these items to avoid damage or injury once the wind starts picking up.
- Secure objects that would be unsafe to bring inside, such as gas grills and propane tanks.
- Trim or remove trees close enough to fall on your home.
- Keep drains, gutters, and downspouts clean.
- Find out if your home is prone to flooding.
  If it is, consider:
  - Installing a sump pump with battery backup.
  - Elevating the heating system, water heater, and electrical panel.
- Review your home insurance policy. Check to see if you are covered for flood damage.
What to Do: During

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!
• Pay attention to weather alerts and local information. Postpone outdoor activities if the forecast calls for thunderstorms.
• When you hear thunder, seek shelter inside a sturdy building and move to a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass windows and doors. Stay inside until weather forecasts indicate it is safe to leave.
• Lightning can be dangerous even when you are inside.
  ○ Avoid using devices connected to electrical outlets.
  ○ Avoid running water. Lightning can travel through plumbing and water lines.
• Remember, no place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm, keep moving toward a safe shelter.
• Sheds, gazebos, dugouts, and bleachers do not protect from lightning and high winds.
• It is dangerous to take shelter under a tree as it is the leading cause of death from lightning strikes. You could also be killed or injured by strong winds blowing down trees and branches.
• Being in a vehicle is safer than being outside; however, if you have time, drive to the closest sturdy building, and take shelter inside.
• If you are driving and can't get to a sturdy building, pull off the road and park in a place where falling trees and power lines won’t hit you.
• Flash flooding happens quickly. Move to higher ground before floodwaters reach you. Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwater. Turn Around! Don’t Drown!

What to Do: After

Prevent Injuries
• Avoid fallen power lines, poles, and wires. They can electrocute you. Report them to the utility company immediately.
• Expect power outages.
  ○ Avoid using candles due to the risk of fires. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.
  ○ Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators, grills, and camp stoves outdoors and away from windows.
  ○ Don’t get sick from eating spoiled food. Throw out food that got wet or warm. When in doubt, throw it out!

Take Care of Yourself
• It’s normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress or anxiety.
• Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
• You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-800-985-5990.