



Are You Ready?

THUNDERSTORMS

A Fact Sheet for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Some thunderstorms can be seen approaching, while others may hit without warning. It is important to learn and recognize the danger signs and to plan ahead for your safety.

Plan ahead.

- Know the warning signs of a thunderstorm, such as dark, towering or threatening clouds.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that can fall during a severe thunderstorm and cause injury and damage.
- Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a thunderstorm.
- Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police or the fire department, and which television station to tune for emergency information.

Stock up on supplies, such as:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cell phone with text message feature or two-way pager and charger to use in your automobile
- Portable TTY with extra batteries
- Batteries and back-up hearing assistive technology
- Portable battery-operated television with extra batteries and charger to use in your automobile
- NOAA radios with text alerts and visual and/or tactile alerts, or AM/FM portable radio if you can hear it with a neckloop or headset
- Extra contact lenses or eyeglasses
- Paper and pens
- First aid kit
- Food and water (for up to 72 hours)
- Non-electric can opener
- Cash and credit cards
- Work or hiking shoes/boots to protect your feet

Develop an emergency communication plan.

In case your household members are separated from each other during a thunderstorm, have a back-up plan

where you can meet each other. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be a contact person. After the thunderstorm, contact that person by pager or TTY. If you don't have a working TTY or pager, ask a hearing person with a cell phone to call for you. Be sure each household member knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings

Severe *thunderstorm watch*: issued by the National Weather Service when the weather conditions are such that a severe thunderstorm (damaging winds blowing 58 miles per hour or more, or hail is at least three-fourths of an inch in diameter) is likely to develop. This is the time to locate a safe place in the home and tell family members to watch the sky and television for more information.

Severe *thunderstorm warning*: Issued when a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radars. At this point, the danger is very serious and everyone should go to a safe place, turn on a television, and wait for the "all clear" signal by authorities.

Learn how to respond to a tornado and flash flood. Tornadoes are spawned by thunderstorms and flash flooding can occur with thunderstorms. When a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, review what actions to take for a tornado warning or a flash flood warning.

Before the Storm

- Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture that could blow away or cause damage or injury. Take lightweight objects inside.
- Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.
- Check the Internet or your television for the latest storm information.

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- Do not handle any electrical equipment or telephones because lightning could come through the wires. Television sets are particularly dangerous at this time.
- Avoid bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity.

If you are outdoors:

- Try 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.
- Crouch with hands on knees.
- 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), bend forward and put your hands on your knees. A position with feet together and crouching while removing all metal objects is recommended. Do not lie flat on the ground.

If you are in a car:

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

Estimating the distance from a thunderstorm

Estimate the number of miles you are from a thunderstorm by counting the number of seconds between a flash of lightning and the next clap of thunder if you can feel it. Divide this number by five.

Lightning

If lightning is taking place, you are already in danger. Knowing how far away a storm is does not mean that you're in danger; danger is only when the storm is immediately near you.

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 contact emergency medical assistance immediately. 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.

Hail

Hail is produced by strong thunderstorms. Hail can be smaller than a pea or as large as a softball, and can be very destructive to plants and crops. In a hailstorm, take cover immediately. Pets and livestock are particularly vulnerable to hail, and should be brought into a shelter immediately.

Information adapted from materials by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov).



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