

Be Prepared...

It's Up to YOU!

Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by tornadoes and severe thunderstorms despite advance warning. Some did not hear the warning, while others heard the warning but did not believe it would happen to them. The following preparedness information, combined with timely severe weather

watches and warnings, could save your life. Once you receive a warning or observe threatening skies, **YOU** must make the decision to seek shelter before the storm arrives. It could be the most important decision you will ever make.

What YOU Can Do Before Severe Weather Strikes

- Develop a plan for you and your family at home, work, school, and when outdoors. The American Red Cross offers planning tips on their Internet site: www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/.
- Identify a safe place to take shelter. Information on how to build a Safe Room (shown in the photos below) in your home or school is available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at www.fema.gov/mit.
- Have frequent drills.
- Know the county/parish in which you live or visit. The National Weather Service issues severe weather warnings on a county or parish basis.
- Keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive warnings.
- National Weather Service watches and warnings are also available on the Internet. Select your local National Weather Service office at www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrhq/nwspage.html or go to the National Weather Service Home Page at www.nws.noaa.gov.
- Listen to radio and television for weather information.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors. Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If severe weather threatens, check on people who are elderly, very young, or physically or mentally disabled.



FEMA



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What YOU Can Do When Threatening Weather Approaches

Lightning Safety Rules

- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. This is your best way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in convertible automobiles. Stay away from tall objects such as towers, fences, telephone poles, and power lines.
- If lightning is occurring and a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep the windows up. Avoid touching any metal.
- Utility lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances not necessary for obtaining weather information. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. Use phones ONLY in an emergency.



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- Do not take a bath or shower during a thunderstorm.
- Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.

If Caught Outdoors and No Shelter Is Nearby



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- Find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. DO NOT lie down.
- If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately!

Remember, if you can hear thunder – you are close enough to be struck by lightning!