

# Severe Summer Weather

## Stay Safe During Severe Summer Weather

While severe weather can occur any time of the year, the peak severe weather season runs from late spring through the summer months. So, now is a good time to review some weather safety rules.

### Flash Flooding

Flash floods and floods are the number one weather killer across the United States. If driving, ***DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOODED AREAS!*** Even if it looks shallow enough to cross. Roadways concealed by floodwaters may not be intact. If caught outside, move to higher ground immediately! Avoid small rivers and streams, low spots, culverts, or ravines. Do not try to walk through flowing water more than ankle deep, as it only takes six inches of water to knock you off your feet. Do not allow children to play around streams, drainage ditches, storm drains, or other flooded areas.

### Thunderstorm Winds

A Severe Thunderstorm Warning means 58 mile per hour winds or greater, or penny size hail or larger are expected. Severe Thunderstorm winds can be stronger than most tornadoes across our area. Damaging Severe Thunderstorm winds are more common than tornadoes, and can overturn mobile homes, tear roofs off of homes and buildings, and can uproot trees. Therefore, it is important that you take shelter, preferably in a basement, and stay away from windows during a Severe Thunderstorm Warning.

### Tornado Safety

A Tornado Warning is issued by the National Weather Service when a tornado has been sighted, or indicated by Doppler radar. In a home or building, move to the basement and get under a sturdy piece of furniture. If no basement is available, move to a small interior room away from windows on the lowest floor and get under something sturdy. Mobile homes offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home for more sturdy shelter. Never try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead leave it immediately for safe shelter. If no shelter is nearby, lie in a ditch with your head covered with your hands. Do not seek shelter under a highway bridge or overpass.

### Heat Safety

Heat kills by taxing the human body beyond its abilities. In a normal year, About 175 Americans succumb to the demands of summer heat. In the 40-year period from 1936 through 1976, nearly 20,000 people were killed in the United States by the effects of heat and solar radiation. To protect yourself from the dangers of heat this summer, follow these safety tips:

- Slow down. Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated, or rescheduled to the coolest time of day.
- Dress for summer. Lightweight light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight, and helps your body maintain normal temperatures.
- Put less fuel in your body. Foods (like proteins) that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.
- Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic beverages. Your body needs water to keep cool.

- If possible, spend more time in air conditioned places. Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces the danger from heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spending some time each day (especially during hot weather) in an air conditioned environment affords some protection.
- Don't get too much sun. Sunburn makes the job of body heat loss much more difficult.

The thing about summer weather is that today the weather can be sunny with a high temperature in the 80's and tomorrow the bottom can fall out of the sky and there will be flooding. It is best to be prepared at all times.

Here are some additional severe weather tips to help you stay safe:

1. Keep batteries and flashlights on hand. Candles are a backup only. They work but can tip over or are blown over by a strong wind and start a fire. Stock all sizes of batteries and have enough flashlights for each member of your family.
2. Have enough bottled water on hand.
3. Maintain an adequate supply of food, including non-perishable food items.
4. Keep a battery-operated radio nearby. If the power goes out, you'll need a way to get updates on the weather conditions and other emergency information.
5. Keep cellular phones fully charged.
6. Make sure your vehicles' fuel tanks are full. There could be an instance when you need to evacuate to some other shelter. An emergency is not the time to start looking for a gasoline station.
7. Create an emergency preparedness kit for severe weather. Include water, blankets, dry clothes, flashlights, matches, canned food, a can opener, a first aid kit, and any other essentials you might need. Refill all prescription medications if severe weather is in the forecast. No one wants to be caught without their medication.
8. Practice what you will do in case of a severe weather emergency. Children, especially, will be frightened during any type of disaster evacuation.
9. Have cash on hand. It is a possibility that ATM machines will be inaccessible and you will need money.
10. Use common sense. Don't travel if severe weather is in the forecast. Get your supplies from the stores ahead of time. Avoid the panic and large crowds in these places once the weather turns bad.

Do not let severe weather catch you off guard. Be prepared by following these suggested tips.

Until next month, be safe!!!

Submitted by Captain Tony Orsini, Terryville Fire Department Health and Safety Officer

Source: National Weather Service