

Severe Weather Awareness

Tips and Guidelines

Tornados

South Carolina has averaged 11 tornadoes each year since 1950, resulting in 47 fatalities and 1,057 injuries. South Carolina ranks twenty-sixth in the United States in the number of tornado strikes, and eighteenth in the number of tornadoes per square mile.

Before a Tornado

Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms.
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - Dark, often greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

During a Tornado

If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately.

- Get indoors to a pre-designated shelter area such as a basement, storm cellar or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls.

- Shutter windows and outside doors.
- If in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or storm shelter.
- If unable to get indoors, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of potential flooding and flying debris.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.

After a Tornado

- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Avoid downed power lines and report them to your utility company.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.



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Thunderstorms

All thunderstorms are dangerous. Every thunderstorm produces lightning. In the United States, an average of 300 people are injured and 80 people are killed each year by lightning. Although most lightning victims survive, people struck by lightning often report a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms. Other associated dangers of thunderstorms include tornadoes, strong winds, hail and flash flooding. Flash flooding is responsible for more fatalities—more than 140 annually—than any other thunderstorm-associated hazard.

Before a Thunderstorm

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage. Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- “If thunder roars, go indoors.” No place outside is safe when lightning is in the area.

During a Thunderstorm



- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.

- If unable to get indoors, seek shelter in a low area and be alert for flash flooding and flying debris.
- Avoid isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas. Avoid anything metal: tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles and golf carts.
- If on open water, get to land and find shelter immediately.
- Your hair standing on end is an indication that lightning is about to strike. If this happens, 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 flat on the ground.

After a Thunderstorm

The following are things you should check when you attempt to give aid to a victim of lightning:

- **Breathing** - if breathing has stopped, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- **Heartbeat** - if the heart has stopped, administer CPR.
- **Pulse** - if the victim has a pulse and is breathing, look for other possible injuries. Check for burns where the lightning entered and left the body. Also, be alert for nervous system damage, broken bones and loss of hearing and eyesight.