

SEVERE WEATHER IS ON THE WAY: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Be prepared for summer storms!

From tornadoes to thunder, hail stones to hurricanes, severe weather has been in the news lately. Severe storms can take place at any time, day or night, anywhere in the country, creating hazardous conditions. Having a plan before the big one hits can help keep you, your family, your home and your possessions safe and secure.



Don't be taken by surprise; here are some ways to prepare for severe weather.

1. Create a Disaster Plan

Sit down with your family and [create a disaster plan](#) that you all can follow. Consider that your family members may be at work, at school, at home, or out shopping when a weather event takes place, so identify safe places to take shelter. You'll want to write down directions to meeting places, important contact information for all family members, and determine how you'll get in touch with one another if cell phones or land lines aren't working.

2. Stock an Emergency Kit

When the weather is inclement, getting to the store to buy supplies can be difficult. Be prepared by [stocking an emergency kit](#). Create your kit with supplies to last a two-week period at home, or at least three days if evacuated. The kit should include items such as:

- Fresh water (One gallon per day, per person)
- Non-perishable, ready-to-eat food
- Flashlight and batteries
- Manual or battery-powered radio
- First aid supplies and medications, both prescription and over-the-counter
- Tool kit
- Blankets and warm clothing
- Maps of your area
- Cell phone and chargers
- Copies of important documents, such as insurance policies, medical documents, birth certificates, and passports

3. Tornadoes and Wind

Tornadoes can cause wind [gusts up to 200 miles per hour](#); these violent storms often leave destruction in their wake. [Prepare for tornadoes](#) by planning a safe place to take shelter, no matter where you are. Usually, this is a basement, storm cellar or an interior room with no windows, such as a bathroom.

Ensure that you know where the fire extinguisher, first-aid kits and utility switches are located before a storm hits. If you live in a tornado-prone region, it's essential to keep up with warnings; a [NOAA Weather Radio](#) is one choice. If a tornado is headed your way, immediately take shelter. Be careful of flying debris and remain in your shelter until the storm passes.

4. Thunder and Hailstorms

Severe thunderstorms are those produce [hail at least one inch in diameter](#). Prepare your home by working with your local fire department to [install lighting protection](#), and keeping trees in your landscape trimmed and free of dead branches.

Prepare your family by identifying a safe place in your home where you can take shelter. Ideally, this should be an interior room without windows, skylights or glass doors, says the [Red Cross](#). Shutter your windows, and avoid touching electrical appliances or taking a bath or shower until the storm passes.

While severe weather can strike anywhere at any time, keeping up-to-date on weather warnings gives you a head start. By spending a bit of time planning, you can help keep your family and your home safe.

5. Mobile Apps

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a free app that enables users to receive alerts on severe weather from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the country, even if the phone is not located in the area, making it easy to follow severe weather that may be threatening family and friends.

Some other key features of the app include:

- **Safety Tips:** Tips on how to stay safe before, during, and after over 20 types of hazards, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes
- **Disaster Reporter:** Users can upload and share photos of damage and recovery efforts
- **Maps of Disaster Resources:** Users can locate and receive driving directions to open shelters and disaster recovery centers
- **Apply for Assistance:** The app provides easy access to apply for federal disaster assistance
- **Information in Spanish:** The app defaults to Spanish-language content for smartphones that have Spanish set as their default language

The latest version of the FEMA app is available for free in the App Store for Apple devices and Google Play for Android devices. To learn more about the FEMA app, visit: [The FEMA App: Helping Your Family Weather the Storm.](#)

Some states may have emergency management apps that could be useful during hurricane season.