

COORDINATOR TIPS

Verna Brown, CEM. EM Coordinator

SOURCES:

Are You Ready: Citizens Guide- FEMA
Hazard Fact Sheets: All Hazards Caucus
National Weather Service

Severe Storm



Severe thunder storms are very likely here in Washington County and can cause lots of damage. Lightning strikes can lead to fires, medical problems, and power outages.

Facts

- They may occur singly, in clusters, or in lines.
- Some of the most severe occur when a single thunderstorm affects one location for an extended time.
- Thunderstorms typically produce heavy rain for a brief period, anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour.
- Warm, humid conditions are highly favorable for thunderstorm development.
- About 10 percent of thunderstorms are classified as severe—one that produces hail at least three-quarters of an inch in diameter, has winds of 58 miles per hour or higher, or produces a tornado.
- Lightning's unpredictability increases the risk to individuals and property.
- Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.
- "Heat lightning" is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction!
- Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the afternoon and evening.
- Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 600,000, but could be reduced even further by following safety precautions.
- Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately.

WHAT TO DO

- Stay indoors as much as possible
- Tune into and pay attention to NOAA Weather Radio
- Avoid using water or metal products or doing tasks requiring either
- Consider using a wireless phone
- Shut off electrical appliances such as AC, computers, television
- Avoid tall, attractive objects, anything metal, or water or open fields
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.

For more information:

<http://www.washco-md.net/EmergencyServices/textcontent/Severe%20Weather.pdf>

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/thunderstorms.shtm>

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Extreme Heat



Extremely hot temperatures are very common here in Washington County and across the region during the summer months. This can lead to power failures and medical problems

Facts

- About 175 Americans die from extreme heat; the elderly, very young, and the obese are most at risk
- Sunburns make it harder for the body to release heat, taking precautions is important

What to do to protect yourself from the heat

- Limit sun exposure and stay in the cool indoors as much as possible, wear adequate sun screen r if you must go outside
- Eat well balanced and light meals
- Avoid non necessary strenuous activity if able
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Know where to go for water and cool air if there is a power failure
- Avoid alcoholic beverages
- Wear loose fitting clothing, wide brim hats, and light colors
- Make sure not to leave children or pets in vehicle

What to do about it

- Limit sun exposure and stay in the cool indoors as much as possible, wear sun screen of 15SPF or higher if you must go outside
- Eat well balanced and light meals

- Avoid non necessary strenuous activity if able
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Know where to go for water and cool air if there is a power failure

Medical problems associated with extreme heat

Condition	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally. • Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles; heavy sweating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the victim to a cooler location. • Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms. • Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. (Do not give liquids with caffeine or alcohol.) • Discontinue liquids, if victim is nauseated.
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale, or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal body temperature is possible, but temperature will likely rise. Fainting or dizziness, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, and headaches are possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get victim to lie down in a cool place. • Loosen or remove clothing. • Apply cool, wet cloths. • Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. • Give sips of water if victim is conscious. • Be sure water is consumed slowly. • Give half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. • Discontinue water if victim is nauseated. • Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs.
Heat Stroke (a severe medical emergency)	High body temperature (105+); hot, red, dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Victim will probably not sweat unless victim was sweating from re-cent strenuous activity. Possible unconsciousness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services, or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. • Move victim to a cooler environment. • Remove clothing. • Try a cool bath, sponging, or wet sheet to reduce body temperature. • Watch for breathing problems. • Use extreme caution. • Use fans and air conditioners.

* Taken from *Are you Ready: Citizens Guide- FEMA*

More Information

- http://www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/heat_aid.shtm
- http://www.hazardscaucus.org/HeatWave_Factsheet1109.pdf

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Flooding



A flood is an increased amount of water; streets, basins, rivers, lakes, ponds, creeks, and even basements can flood. Floods are the most frequent disaster in the US and occur quite frequently. A Flash flood is a short lived increase in water, such as a stream overflowing and than receding.

Facts

- 2 Feet of water can move a large vehicle
- 66% of flood related deaths occur in vehicles
- Floods are not limited to one area, entire regions are effected
- It is important to avoid building in flood plains

WHAT TO DO

- Tune into and listen to NOAA Weather radio
- Know where near your house flooding is likely
- Be ready to relocate or take shelter if need be
- Shut off electrical appliances

For more information:

<http://www.fema.gov/about/programs/nfip/index.shtm>

<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/faqs.jsp>

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/flood.shtm>

<http://www.hazardscaucus.org/FloodFactsheet0909.pdf>

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Tornado



The tornado is nature's most volatile storms. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with rotating winds that can reach up to 300 miles per hour.

Facts

- They may strike quickly, with little or no warning.
- The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 MPH, but may vary from stationary to 70 MPH.
- They are most frequently reported east of the Rocky Mountains during spring and summer months.
- They are most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., but can occur at any time.

WHAT TO DO

- Tune in and listen to NOAA Radio
- Be ready to take shelter in a safe room, basement, or other underground shelter
- If there is no basement, put as many walls as you can between you and the elements
- Stay away from corners and windows, they attract debris
- DO NOT open windows
- DO NOT go under an overpass or bridge, flat land is safer
- NEVER try to outrun a tornado

For more information:

<http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/edu/safety/tornadoguide.html>

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/tornadoes.shtm>

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Tropical Storm/ Hurricanes



A Tropical storm is a cyclonic pattern storm formed from low pressure in the atmosphere with winds between 33 and 74 MPH, a hurricane is formed at 74 MPH.

Facts

- Storm surge from the storm can be up to 25 feet high and one thousand miles wide
- 5% of deaths in during a hurricane result from related tornados

What to do

- Keep a family plan and go kit
- Maintain Flood Insurance on your property
- Tune into NOAA Weather Radio
- Evacuate when and if instructed to do so

More Information

http://www.hazardscaucus.org/hurricanes_factsheet0909.pdf
<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/hurricanes.shtm>