



What's the difference between a WATCH and a WARNING for severe weather?

WATCH: Indicates the possibility of or favorable conditions for severe weather modes. Usually lasts several hours and covers a large area, sometimes multiple counties or portions of several states. Be prepared to take action and remain alert.

WARNING: A severe thunderstorm has been identified, either by a trained storm spotter or radar. Usually lasts under an hour, and only includes a small portion in front of the path of the storm. If you are in or near the designated area, take precautions and seek shelter immediately.



SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

CHECKLIST



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Severe Weather Preparedness Plan

Plan ahead.

It is important to put this in place and plan it out beforehand. When a warning is issued, you will not have time to figure it out.

Download weather alert and radar apps.

Follow weather forecasts weekly and use social media or weather apps for real time information and updates. Stay alert to give you and your family as much warning as possible.

Designate a safe room or shelter space

You are not safe in a mobile home, RV, or vehicle. When preparing a severe weather emergency plan, designate a space as your shelter beforehand. The following are the best options for shelter:

- Basement or cellar below ground
- Lowest floor, interior room, no windows (closet, bathroom)
- Interior safe room/tornado shelter
- Community storm shelter, or neighboring storm shelter

When taking shelter, protect your head with a helmet, or by covering it with pillows or blankets, or your arms if no other options are available.

If possible, avoid leaving your home when severe weather watches are issued. If you are at home or school when a severe weather event is occurring, it is best to shelter where you are until it has passed. All modes of severe weather are far more dangerous when encountered on the road.

Develop communication plan

- Make sure you can get in touch with your family if a warning is issued
- Store emergency contact numbers in cellphones, or post in a public area such as the fridge

Develop action plan

- Make sure you know where to go if a warning is issued
- Make sure you have a plan in place for pets and disabled family members
- Periodically go over your plan with your family to ensure everyone knows what to do
- Periodically check your supply kit and replace batteries, bulbs, and defective equipment if needed

Protect yourself on the road

- Keep your vehicle in a covered space or garage if severe weather is in the forecast
- Keep a large blanket or special hail covering in your vehicle to use if cover isn't available
- Keep a portable emergency kit in your vehicle, including a first aid kit, charged cell phone, flashlight, and batteries
- Do NOT shelter beneath bridges and overpasses. It blocks the flow of traffic, preventing others from finding shelter from hail, and bridges and overpasses are NOT adequate shelter from tornadoes.
- If you experience hail on the road, seek the nearest covered area or pull over when it is safe to do so and move away from the windows until it passes.
- If you can't find shelter from a tornado on the road, exit your car and lay down in a ditch or low lying area and cover your head with your arms.

Protect yourself from lightning

- Watch the weather and plan outdoor events around potential thunderstorms to avoid the risk of lightning strikes.
- If caught outside, move to shelter as fast as possible avoiding solitary objects out in the open or tall objects like trees.
- Shelter in a sturdy, well built enclosed structure.
- Stay away from doors and windows
- Do not bathe, wash dishes, or use electronics plugged in to the wall
- Cars with solid metal frames and roofs can provide shelter from lightning if necessary

At Home

Protect your home and property by taking these steps to mitigate damage before severe weather.

- Trim trees and shrubs away from structures
- Inspect roof for leaks and previous damage
- Clean gutters and drains to prevent flooding and leaks
- Store or secure outdoor furniture and property
- Cover vehicles or store in garage if possible

Severe Weather Emergency Kit

When a severe storm is in progress, you won't have time to gather essential supplies. Make sure that you and everyone in your household has the following items gathered in a place that is easily accessible.

- Flashlight and batteries
- NOAA weather radio
- First aid kit
- Water
- Protective helmet/bike helmet
- Gloves
- Close-toed shoes
- Pants, long-sleeved shirts, and/or jackets
- Essential medication
- Fully-charged phone, charger
- Blankets and pillows
- Emergency whistle (to signal for help)

