

Spring & Summer Storms

Introduction

At any given moment, there are roughly 2,000 thunderstorms in progress around the world. Most of these storms are beneficial, bringing needed rainfall to farmlands and reservoirs. Only a small fraction (less than 1 percent) of these storms is classified as severe, producing large hail æ inch in diameter or larger and / or strong downburst wind gusts of 58 miles an hour or greater. A small fraction of the severe storms produce tornadoes.

Thunderstorms can produce damaging thunderstorm winds, downbursts or microbursts, hail, frequent lightning, tornadoes and heavy rain.

Even though a small percentage of the storms are classified as severe, we must take precautions and prepare for those storms that are severe.

Watches and Warnings

- *Everyone needs to be aware of the differences between Watches & Warnings...*
- **Watch** – Conditions are favorable and severe weather is possible within the designated watch area. Be alert!
- **Warning** – Severe weather has been reported or indicated by radar. The event is happening! Take necessary precautions immediately!

Thunderstorms

Keep an eye on the sky. At signs of approaching storm...towering thunderheads, darkening skies, lightning, increased wind...tune in your portable or vehicle radio and listen for the latest weather information. When severe weather threatens, seek shelter inside a home, secure building, or an automobile. Avoid using the telephone except for emergencies.

If you are caught outside:

- Do not stand under a tall, isolated tree or a telephone pole.
- Avoid silhouetting yourself above the surrounding landscape...don't stand on a hilltop.
- In an open area, go to a low area like a ravine, bully, or valley.
- On a golf course, remove metal spiked shoes, put down golf clubs, and avoid electric carts.
- On a lake in a boat, get off the lake as quickly as possible and seek shelter.
- Stay away from metal fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, and metal rails.

- Get off or away from open water, wet sand, tractors, metal equipment, batting cages, or small metal vehicles, such as bicycles, motorcycles, golf carts, etc.
- If you are caught away from shelter and feel your hair stand on end, lightning may be about to strike. Crouch on the balls of your feet and bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. This minimizes your contact with the ground and provides a lesser target for lightning to strike. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND**

Tornados

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that can cause major devastation and loss of life. They can strike without warning and even with warning, are very unpredictable. Whenever a tornado warning has been issued and / or the warning systems have been activated, seek shelter immediately and turn your radio or TV on to a local station for information.

In Homes...

Seek shelter in the basement under heavy furniture or reinforced structure such as the stairs. In homes without basements, seek shelter in a small interior room on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom, closet, or hallway. Keep away from windows and protect yourself from flying debris by covering up with a blanket or bed mattress.

In Mobile Homes / Trailers...

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable and should be evacuated. Mobile home parks should have a pre-designated storm shelter. If there is no shelter nearby, leave and take cover in a sturdy, reinforced structure. Residents are encouraged to preplan for emergency evacuation and shelter with friends, neighbors, or family. **DO NOT** wait until the last minute to evacuate...allow sufficient time to leave your mobile home and arrive at your shelter area.

In Schools...

Follow advance plans and go to the designated shelter area. Listen and pay attention to the teacher or principal. Stay out of auditoriums, gyms, and other structures with open free-span roofs.

In Shopping Centers...

Go to a designated shelter area and stay out of open areas.

In Office Buildings / Hotels / Motels...

Go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor or to a designated shelter. Avoid windows, skylights, and other areas containing glass.

In Vehicles...

Leave and move away from you vehicle. Do not try and outrun the tornado. Seek shelter in a nearby building. If shelter is unavailable, lie flat in a nearby ditch, ravine, or gully.

In Open Country...

Seek shelter in a nearby ditch, ravine, or gully. Cover your head and be aware of possible rising water from heavy rains that often accompany a tornado.

Prepare and Be Aware

The best thing for you to do for yourself and your family is to have a plan and have prepared for when severe weather threatens. Nature is more or less unpredictable and severe weather can strike quickly. Have a plan for you and your family to take shelter and protect yourselves. Be aware of what the weather is doing and pay attention to watches and warnings that have been issued for the area you are in. Receive the information and take measures to protect yourself and your loved ones.

NOAA Weather Radios

A NOAA Weather Radio will notify you when a watch or warning has been issued. It will notify you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It will notify you when you are sleeping or awake and not disrupt your normal routine unless a weather announcement is issued. When activated, the radio will emit a siren-like wail to notify you that important weather information is about to be broadcast. The wail is loud enough to wake most persons from a sound sleep and may be the only method of notification when sleeping. The information broadcast is direct from the National Weather Service, is current, and will usually include steps you can take to protect yourself from the impending storm.

The NOAA Weather Radio can be heard on frequency 162.450 within approximately 40 mile radius of the City of Mitchell.