

# SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY

**When thunder roars, go indoors!** Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. Thunderstorms can be dangerous storms that include lightning, create hail, and spawn tornadoes. If you are under a thunderstorm warning, go indoors. A sturdy building is the safest place to be during a storm. Avoid running water or using landline phones. Electricity can travel through plumbing and phone lines. Unplug appliances and other electric devices.

**Tornadoes can happen at any time** and can cause great damage to you and your property. Warning signs that you may notice can include a dark or greenish sky, large hail, a dark low-lying sky (particularly rotating) or a loud roar. Tornado watches and warnings are issued as soon as the conditions are identified.

**Tornado watches** are issued by the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma, when tornadoes are possible in the area and the conditions or the weather is right for a tornado to occur. A watch encompasses a broad area and lasts for several hours. **Tornado warnings** are issued by local National Weather Service Forecast Offices when a tornado is on the ground or has been detected by Doppler radar. A warning is for a small area (one or more counties) and usually lasts for 30 minutes to an hour. You should seek shelter immediately. Listen to an Emergency Alert System, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.

- If you can safely get to a sturdy building, then do so immediately.
- Go to a safe room, basement, or storm cellar.
- If you are in a building with no basement, then get to a small interior room on the lowest level.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck. Take additional cover by shielding your head and neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around you.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.
- If you are in a car or outdoors and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.

## **Be safe AFTER a storm.**

- Keep listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
- If you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.
- Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.
- Do not enter damaged buildings until you are told that they are safe.
- Save your phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves.