

## WEATHER HAZARDS AWARENESS GUIDE

The following information is provided by the  
NYS Disaster Preparedness Commission

When Inclement Weather Hits: Remain **CALM** but take **IMMEDIATE** action.

- **If on vacation or driving through an unfamiliar area**, remember the county you are in and where you are in relation to other towns and cities.
- **Know how to get to a safe place quickly** if a weather warning is issued. Develop a plan for you and your family at home, work, school and when outdoors.
- **Check on neighbors who require special assistance:** infants, the elderly, and people with disabilities. *Don't forget to plan for your pets and/or livestock!*
- **Alert your utility** if someone in your family uses life-support equipment.
- **Avoid all downed power lines** –assume they are live with electricity.

### **IF YOUR LIGHTS GO OUT:**

- **Call your utility first** to determine area repair schedules. **Turn off or unplug lights and appliances** to prevent a circuit overload when electric service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored.
- **To help prevent freezing pipes**, turn on faucets slightly. Running water will not freeze as quickly.
- **PROTECT** yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning. **DO NOT** operate generators indoors; the motor emits deadly carbon monoxide gas. **DO NOT** use charcoal to cook indoors – it, too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas. **DO NOT** use your gas oven to heat your home – prolonged use of the open oven in a closed house can also create carbon monoxide gas. Make sure all fuel space heaters are used with proper ventilation.
- **Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed** as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.

And the forecast calls for....



## HOT and SUNNY

- Wear sun block and protective clothing to prevent sunburn, skin cancer and premature aging.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Avoid strenuous activity in hot weather.
- On very hot days, stay in air-conditioned shelter.



## SNOW & ICE

**Winter Storm Watch** – severe winter weather conditions may affect your area.

**Winter Storm Warning** – severe winter weather conditions are imminent.

**Blizzard Warning** – large amount of falling or blowing snow and winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected to last for several hours. Visibility is dangerously restricted.

**Wind Chill** – the effect of wind, in combination with actual temperature, which increases the rate of heat loss to the human body. Also the temperature at which exposed skin suffers frostbite within a short time period.

### If you are under shelter:

- Remember to service snow removal equipment. Stay inside – avoid driving in dangerous snow or ice.

### If you are outdoors:

- Avoid over exertion. Cold weather puts added strain on the heart. Shoveling or pushing a car can cause a heart attack.

### If you are in a vehicle:

- Stay in your car. **DO NOT** leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless assistance is visible within 100 feet. You can become disoriented and lost in blowing snow.
- Display a trouble sign. Hang a bright colored cloth on the car radio antenna, raise the hood and turn on flashing hazard lights.
- Occasionally run the engine to keep warm. Keep the window slightly open and beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Keep exhaust pipe clear.



## TORNADO

**Tornado Watch** – conditions are favorable over a large area for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes to develop.

**Tornado Warning** – a tornado has been detected or seen, is on the ground and moving and is expected to move through your area soon. You should **TAKE COVER IMMEDIATELY!**

### *Environmental Clues to look out for:*

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- Wall cloud
- Loud roar, similar to a freight train

### **If you are outdoors:**

- Seek shelter in a substantial building immediately. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in a ditch or low spot with your hands shielding your head. **DO NOT** try to outrun a tornado in your car. Instead, leave it immediately and seek shelter.
- Avoid all downed power lines. Assume they are live with electricity.

### **If you are at home or in a small building:**

- Go to the basement or an interior room on the lowest floor. Stay away from windows. Closets, bathrooms and other interior rooms offer the best protection. Get under something sturdy or cover yourself with a mattress.

### **If you are in a school, hospital or shopping center:**

- Go to a pre-designated shelter area. Stay away from large open areas and windows. **DO NOT** go outside to your car.

### **If you are in a high-rise building:**

- Go to an interior small room or hallway on the lowest floor possible. **DO NOT** use the elevators. Use the stairs.

### **If you are in a mobile home or vehicle:**

- **Get out!** Mobile homes and vehicles are easily tossed about by strong winds in the tornado. Take shelter in a substantial structure. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in a ditch or low spot with your hands shielding your head.



## THUNDERSTORMS

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** – severe thunderstorms are possible in and close to the watch area.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** – a severe thunderstorm has been spotted and is going to move through your county soon.

### **If you are outdoors:**

- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- Move to a sturdy building or car. **DO NOT** take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, near fences, poles or in convertible automobiles. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible; minimize your contact with the ground. If lightning occurs and sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep the windows up.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- Stay away from telephone lines and metal pipes, which can conduct electricity.

### **If you are under shelter:**

**DO NOT** take a bath or shower.

- Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressors.
- Unplug appliances not necessary for obtaining weather information. Use the telephone only for emergencies.



**If you are outdoors:**

- Get to higher ground. Watch out for washed out roads, earth slides, broken water or sewer mains, loose or downed electric wires and falling or fallen objects.
- **DO NOT** attempt to drive over a flooded road. Most flash flooding deaths occur in automobiles.

**If you are under shelter:**

- Find out how many feet your property is above and below possible flood levels.
- Keep materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing.
- If you are in a multi-story dwelling, move essential items and furniture to upper floors.
- Disconnect electric appliances that can't be moved. **DO NOT** touch them if you are wet or standing in water.



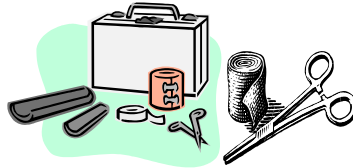
**Hurricane Watch** – conditions are possible in the specified area, usually within 36 hours.

**Hurricane Warning** – conditions are expected in the specified area, usually within 24 hours.

- **Learn safe routes inland and the location of official shelters. Fuel and service vehicles.**
- **Put up storm shutters and store loose objects. Brace exterior doors.**
- **Set refrigerator to maximum cold. Open only when necessary.**
- **Stay away from windows and doors. If you are in a multi-story dwelling, go to the lowest floor. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, hallway, or under a table.**
- **If you are told to leave your home – do so! Plan to evacuate if you live in a mobile home, high-rise, or the coastline or offshore island, or near a river or flood plain.**

## Have disaster supplies on hand, including:

- Flashlights
  - Battery-operated radio
  - Emergency food and water
  - Extra blankets & sleeping bags
  - First aid kit & manual
  - Emergency heating equipment used properly
- Extra batteries
  - Essential medicines
  - Manual can opener
  - Fire extinguisher
  - Checkbook, cash
  - credit/ATM cards



**PLAN AHEAD FOR  
ALL TYPES OF WEATHER!**

**MONITOR THE WEATHER**

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, TV or emergency broadcast stations.

For more information regarding weather emergencies, please contact your local county emergency management office or visit the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) website at: <http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us>