

SEVERE WEATHER, LIGHTNING AND HAIL



Areas of Focus

Thunderstorm Winds

Hail

Lightning

Prepare & Respond

Tuesday's Focus

Thunderstorms affect relatively small areas, compared with most other storms. The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts for 30 minutes — but whatever their size, all thunderstorms are dangerous.

Severe thunderstorms produce large hail or winds of at least 58 mph. Some wind gusts can exceed 100 mph and produce tornado-like damage. That's why many communities will sound their outdoor sirens for damaging straight-line winds.

Thunderstorm Winds

Thunderstorms can produce straight-line winds that exceed 100 miles per hour. The strong rush of wind from a thunderstorm is called a downburst. Strong downbursts can be mistaken for tornadoes.

Damage from severe wind accounts for half of all weather damage reports in the lower 48 states and is more common than damage from tornadoes.



Lightning

Every thunderstorm produces lightning. Lightning kills an average of 47 Americans each year. Hundreds more are severely injured.

- NO PLACE outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area!
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.

Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

Hail

Hail is product of thunderstorms that causes nearly \$1 billion in damage every year. Most hail is about pea-sized. Much of it is the size of baseballs, and it can reach grapefruit-size. Large hail stones fall faster than 100 mph and have been known to kill people.

Preparation and Response-Stearns County

Preparation

Check the weather forecast when planning outdoor activities. Be alert for signs of thunderstorms (thunderhead clouds, dark skies, lightning, increasing winds) when you are outside.

Designate a safe area in your home to shelter your family, such as the basement or an internal room with no windows. If you live in an apartment building, review safe areas with your building manager. If you live in a mobile home, make sure it is anchored to the ground or foundation, and know the locations of safe shelters.

Response

If you are unsure whether you should seek shelter, use the "30-30" rule. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles of you and is dangerous. Seek shelter immediately. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter.

Lightning Safety for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

We all know that "When thunder roars, go indoors." But what if you can't hear the thunder? That's why meteorologists created a new slogan that would be more inclusive of the deaf and hard of hearing community. As a result, "See a flash, dash inside" is now used in conjunction with the original slogan above.

[Public service announcement on lightning safety for the deaf and hard of hearing.](#)