

## Severe Weather

Severe weather is defined as any aspect of the weather which can pose a threat to life and property. Scroll down for more information on the weather related threats listed below:

- Severe Thunderstorms,
- Lightning,
- High Winds,
- Hail,
- Tornadoes,
- Flooding and;
- Severe Winter Weather.

### If severe weather threatens, you should:

- Follow instructions as provided by your department/university.
- Listen to radio and television for weather updates.
- Check with media for closings.

### Where to get local weather conditions:

Local media outlets will provide updates and information on severe weather. UNT officials will notify local outlets regarding closings.

- Television (cable/satellite channels may vary)
- Radio
- Online
- National Weather Service <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/>

### Severe Thunderstorms

The typical thunderstorm is relatively small in size and affects a limited geographic area. Every thunderstorm produces lightning and severe thunderstorms can produce high winds, hail, and/or tornadoes. Heavy rains associated with these storms can also cause flooding. All thunderstorms are potentially dangerous. See guidance for each associated hazard.

- Severe thunderstorm watch — this means that severe thunderstorms are possible. You should remain alert for approaching storms, watch the sky, and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radios, commercial radio, or the local news for more information.
- Severe thunderstorm warning — this means that a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. You should take shelter immediately.

### Lightning

### What You Need to Know:

- NO PLACE outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area!!
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- Avoid open areas, places near water, trees, metal fences, overhead wires or power lines, as well as elevated ground or open vehicles.
- Use the 30/30 lightning safety rule: go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder.
- Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

### Indoor Lightning Safety:

- Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity.
- Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

### Last Resort Outdoor Risk Reduction Tips:

If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby the following actions *may* reduce your risk:

- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks
- Never lie flat on the ground
- Never shelter under an isolated tree
- Never use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.)

### High Wind

High winds can occur during a severe thunderstorm, with a strong weather system, or can flow down a mountain. When winds are sustained at 40-50 mph, isolated wind damage is possible. A widespread significant wind damage can occur with higher wind speeds. During strong thunderstorms, straight line wind speeds can exceed 100 mph. High winds can blow objects around and pose a significant threat to your safety. Understanding the risks can help you prepare for these events.

### Take Shelter

- Immediately go inside a sturdy building during a high wind warning or severe thunderstorm warning and move to an interior room or basement.
- If you are in a mobile home, move to a sturdy building before the winds pick up or the storm system reaches your location.
- Listen to the local news or NOAA Weather Radio for updates.

## If Caught Outside or Driving

- Take shelter in your car if you are not near a sturdy building. If possible, drive to a nearby sturdy building. Otherwise, move your car to a location where it is less likely to be hit by falling trees or powerlines.
- If no shelter is available avoid trees, power lines, and the side of the road. Keep in mind that power lines that are laying on the ground may be live. Do not go near them! Try to find a place that will block blowing or falling debris.
- If you are driving and aren't near a sturdy building, hold the steering wheel with both hands and slow down.
- Keep a distance from high profile vehicles such as trucks, buses and vehicles towing trailers. One strong gust of wind can be enough to flip one of these trailers onto its side.

## Hail

Hail is a form of precipitation which consists of balls or irregular lumps of ice. It forms on condensation nuclei such as dust, insects, or ice crystals, when super-cooled water freezes on contact.

Once a hailstone is too heavy to be supported by the storm's updraft, it falls out of the cloud. These hailstones can range from pea-sized to softball-sized clusters of ice, with large stones falling at speeds faster than 100 mph.

Before the hail storm:

- Learn to recognize the weather conditions that cause hail storms.
- Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio, local news, and radio stations for hail storm watches or warnings.
- If weather conditions are prime for hail storms, consider pulling property under covered areas.
- As hail is usually paired with severe thunderstorms and/or tornadoes, follow the safety procedures specified for the most severe threat.

If a severe thunderstorm has been predicted to produce hail, you should:

- Seek shelter immediately. Any size hail can be dangerous in high winds.
- Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio, local news, and radio stations for updates on weather conditions and emergency instructions.

## Tornado

Tornadoes are considered to be one of nature's most violent storms. With winds that can reach 300 miles per hour and damage paths in excess of one mile, this deadly phenomena can form in a matter of seconds.

First, you must familiarize yourself with the differences between a tornado watch and tornado warning.

- Tornado watch — this means that tornadoes are possible. You should remain alert for approaching storms, watch the sky, and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radios, commercial radio, or the local news for more information.
- Tornado warning — this means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. You should take shelter immediately.

If a tornado warning has been issued, you should:

- Go to the basement or lowest floor of the building.
- Stay away from exterior walls, doors, and windows.
- Move to interior hallways and small interior rooms (e.g., bathroom, closet, etc.).
- Get under a piece of furniture if possible (e.g. sturdy table, desk).
- Call 911 if emergency help is needed.

Once the storm has passed, you should:

- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound indoors, open windows and leave the building. See Gas Leak section in Emergency Management Guidelines menu of app for more information.
- Monitor your portable or weather radio for instructions or an official "all clear" notice. Radio stations will broadcast what to do, the location of emergency shelters, medical aid stations, and the extent of damage.
- Evacuate damaged buildings. Do not re-enter until declared safe by authorities.
- Call 911 only to report a life threatening emergency.

## **Flooding**

Flooding and Flash floods are dangerous!

Be prepared and listen to all warnings issued for your area. Rising water can overtake a vehicle and your home in seconds. Learn how flooding occurs and what you can do to minimize the damages to your property. More importantly, getting educated on floodwaters could save you or your loved ones in the event of an emergency.

- Do not walk or drive across flood waters.
- Avoid recreational contact with flood waters due to the unknown amount of raw sewage, waste chemicals and the risk of drowning.
- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, stop, turn around and go another way. Six inches of swiftly moving water can sweep you off of your feet.
- If you come upon a flooded road while driving, turn around and go another way. Most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water.
- Do not go floating, boating, swimming or rowing in flood-waters; streams or the river.
- Use special caution at night because flood danger is more difficult to recognize in darkness

- Stay Away From Power Lines and Electrical Wires. Electrocutation is also a major killer in floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to UNT Police Department at 940-565-3000.
- Stay Alert for email and text alerts from campus officials about issues and conditions that may affect you and campus.

### **Severe Winter Weather**

Winter storms are known as deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm, such as vehicle accidents caused by winter road conditions, improper use of heaters, and exposure/hypothermia. Severe winter weather includes freezing temperatures, freezing rain, ice, heavy snow, and blizzards. Accumulation of ice or snow can knock down trees, power lines, and structures causing power outages, utility disruptions, and communication interruptions.

#### **What to do during a winter storm:**

- Monitor local weather broadcasts and weather conditions.
- Stay indoors and minimize travel. If you must travel, drive slowly, and increase distance required for stopping.
- Watch for downed trees and power lines.
- Keep a full tank to prevent ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Never use a portable generator or operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in an enclosed space.

See Inclement Weather section in Emergency Guidelines menu of app for more information on winter weather.