

Severe Weather

Severe weather is prevalent during the summer months in Indiana. Thunderstorms can produce large hail, flash floods, heavy rain, lightning, strong winds, and tornadoes that can reach speeds in excess of 300 mph, be more than a mile wide, and cover approximately 50 miles during destruction. Thunderstorms, flash floods, and tornadoes can all appear suddenly with little warning, and may only last a few minutes, but have the strength and power to cause a great amount of damage.

Things to Know:

Watch: conditions are favorable for a thunderstorm, flood, or tornado.

Warning: a thunderstorm, flood, or tornado is occurring or is likely to occur soon.

Before Severe Weather Strikes:

- Keep trees trimmed to avoid falling onto buildings, cars or people.
- If hail or strong winds are reported, park your vehicle under a shelter to avoid damage.
- Contact your insurance provider if you are in a flood plain. Many insurance companies do not include flood damage unless you ask.
- If in a flood plain, put hot water heaters, electrical panels, and furnaces away from the ground.
- When making a disaster kit, make sure you can take it with you in case of evacuation.
- Have basements waterproofed.
- If flooding is possible, try to create a barrier between your house and the water.



During Severe Weather:

- Postpone or cancel outdoor activities and listen to weather reports on the radio or television.
- Seek shelter inside a building or in a hardtop vehicle, but do not touch the metal inside.
- Do NOT go near tall trees or any other tall objects, or near downed power lines.
- Do NOT go under overpasses. Wind speeds increase and can cause serious injuries.
- If in a vehicle, get out and go into a strong building if possible. If not, lie in a flat ditch or low area and cover your head. Be aware of low lying areas that may flood.
- If you live in a mobile home, get out immediately. Shelter in a building with a strong foundation.
- If caught out in the middle of a body of water, return to shore as soon as possible.
- Basements, inner rooms, and storm cellars provide the best protection during a thunderstorm or tornado. Stay in the center of the room, away from doors and windows.



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Evacuating:

- If flooding is possible, evacuate your house and get to higher ground. Know your town and make sure you know alternate escape routes in case one is blocked.
- Take pets with you if you evacuate. However, many shelters usually do NOT allow pets inside due to sanitary conditions, so plan accordingly.
- Do NOT try to drive through water. As little as a few inches of moving water can wash most cars away with the current.
- Do NOT drive through water rushing over a roadway. It can easily sweep your car away.
- Do NOT try to cross moving water on foot. As little as a few inches can knock you off your feet.



After Severe Weather:

- If injured, seek necessary medical care.
- If you can safely, help others who may be trapped or injured.
- Stay out of damaged buildings and any building surrounded by flood water.
- Avoid entering ANY building (home, business, etc.) until local officials indicate it is safe.
- Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities.
- Wear sturdy shoes and use extreme caution when entering buildings.
- Use battery powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.
- Examine foundations, walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows for cracks or other damage to ensure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.
- Look for fire hazards and beware of possible water, gas, or oil leaks.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into buildings with the floodwaters.

After Returning Home:

- Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Throw away food that has come into contact with floodwater.
- If water is questionable purity, boil, and distill drinking water before using.
- Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible.
- Contact your local health department before making repairs to septic systems.



**For more information on severe weather,
visit the IDHS website: www.in.gov/dhs**

Leadership for a Safe and Secure Indiana.

