

# Are You Prepared For Severe Weather Season?

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*Explore Severe  
Weather Safety:*

[Thunderstorms](#)  
[Damaging Winds](#)

[Tornadoes](#)

[Lightning](#)

[Flooding](#)

As we turn the calendar page to March, we also progress into a brand new Meteorological Season! The arrival of meteorological Spring marks a shift in focus from winter weather hazards to [severe weather oriented impacts](#). Of the 250 Severe Weather Warnings (Severe, Tornado, Flash Flood) issued by our office in 2017, nearly 87% were issued during the Spring and Summer months, and over 390 different damage reports were submitted to our office from across central North Carolina. So how should we prepare for the most common hazards of the upcoming severe weather season? Follow along as we outline these hazards, and provide useful tips and tricks to help you remain #WeatherReady when Severe Weather threatens.

## How should you prepare for severe weather?

**Know your risk!** Our area is prone to [Thunderstorms](#), [Hail](#), [Damaging Winds](#), [Tornadoes](#), [Lightning](#), [Heat](#), [Fire](#), [Flooding](#), [Drought](#), and more during the spring and summer seasons. Do you know how to prepare for these threats? Click their corresponding links and continue reading below to find out more safety/preparedness information!

**Make a plan!** At home? At work? At school? On vacation? Always have a plan in place to respond to any and all weather hazards that may arise. And REMEMBER.... Practice like you play! More information can be found [here](#).

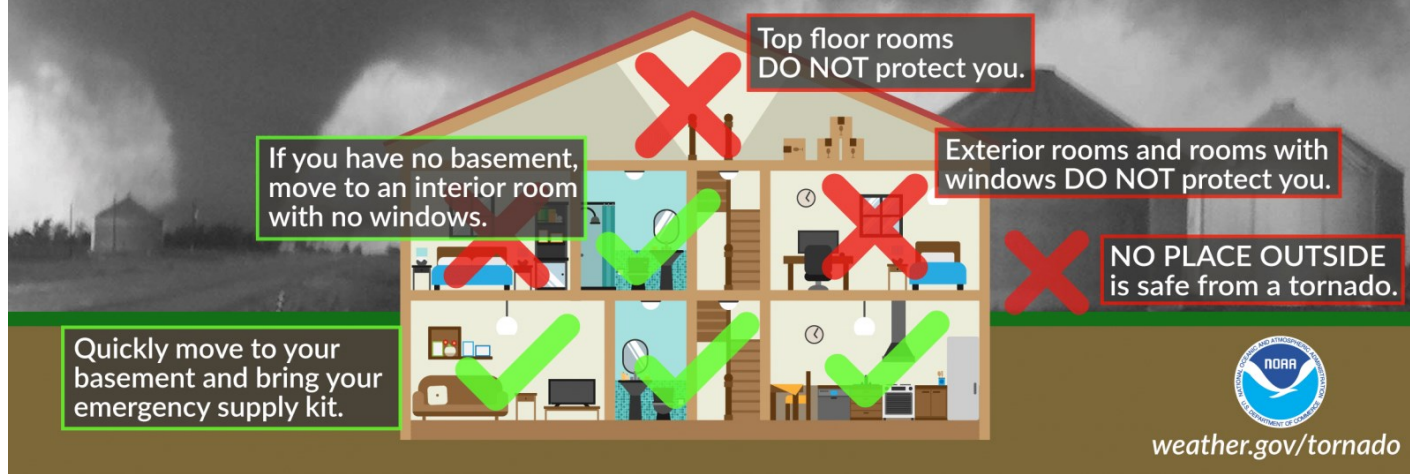
**Remain #WeatherReady and Weather Aware!** Know your location, and how to identify that location on a map. Also, always have a [NOAA Weather Radio](#) handy, or another reliable way to receive up-to-date weather information and alerts.



WEATHER READY NATION

# Know Where to Go

## When Sheltering from a Tornado



## Tornadoes

According to the [Storm Prediction Center](#), on average, 28 tornadoes occur across the state of North Carolina each year, and just under 50% of those events occur during the Spring months of March, April, and May. While tornadoes may not be as common here as in other US locations, such as the Great Plains or along the Gulf Coast, dense population centers across the eastern half of the country make our area especially vulnerable if an event were to occur. Thus, knowing the proper actions to take if a Tornado Watch/Warning is issued can be the difference between life and death! Remember... Every second counts!

- *Wherever you are...* ensure that you have a NOAA Weather Radio or another reliable way to receive severe weather alerts/information.
- *If you are at home...* take shelter in your basement or safe room. If those options are not available, move to an interior room away from windows.
- *If you are at school or work...* follow previously practiced tornado drill guidelines.
- *If you are outside...* move into a sturdy shelter immediately. If not available, shelter in a low-lying area.
- *If you are inside of a vehicle...* do not shelter under a bridge or overpass. Instead, drive to the nearest sturdy structure, and take shelter immediately. If not shelter is available, vacate your vehicle and shelter in a low-lying area.

Local Tornado Event Reviews...

[April 16th, 2011 NC Tornado Outbreak](#)

[Oct 27, 2010 Tornado Event](#)

[March 28, 2010 Tornado Event](#)

[April 25th, 2010 Tornado Event](#)

[March 27th, 2009 Tornado Event](#)

[Nov 15th, 2008 Tornado Event](#)

## Damaging Winds and Hail

Thunderstorms produce a variety of hazards and impacts, some of the most common of which are hail and damaging winds. The National Weather Service considers a thunderstorm “Severe” when it produces either wind speeds in excess of 58mph and/or 1 inch diameter hail stones. These hazards often produce damage to trees, homes, and vehicles, but can turn especially hazardous to people and animals outside in the elements.

- *Wherever you are...* ensure that you have a NOAA Weather Radio or another reliable way to receive severe weather alerts/information.
- *If you are at home or work...* take shelter in an interior room away from windows.
- *If you are outside...* move into a sturdy shelter immediately.
- *If you are inside of a vehicle...* do not shelter under a bridge or overpass. Instead, drive to the nearest sturdy structure, and take shelter immediately.

**KEEP IN MIND:** “Severe Thunderstorms” can strengthen or weaken rapidly, and have been known to produce tornadoes, with little warning

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[rah.reports@noaa.gov](mailto:rah.reports@noaa.gov)

[www.weather.gov/raleigh](http://www.weather.gov/raleigh)

### Interested in becoming a Skywarn Storm Spotter?

Visit: <https://www.weather.gov/rah/skywarn>



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Local Wind/Hail Event Reviews...

[Jan 11, 2014 Thunderstorm Wind Event](#)

[October 1st, 2008 Severe Weather Event](#)

[July 8th, 2008 Severe Weather Event](#)

[May 20th, 2008 Severe Weather Event](#)

## Lightning

Thunderstorms don't necessarily need to be "severe" to be dangerous. In 2017, 16 people were struck and killed by lightning in the United States ([well below normal!](#)), including 2 people in North Carolina. Males are the most common lightning strike fatality victims, totaling nearly 80% between the years 2007-2017. Most commonly, the victims are struck while participating in outdoor activities such as; sports, visiting beaches, boating, or continuing to work outside while a thunderstorm approaches. Lightning strikes can be avoided easily.... BY STAYING INSIDE when storms threaten! See below for some common facts and fiction about lightning.

### Lightning FACTS and FICTION

- **FACT:** Lightning can strike as far as 25 miles away from its parent thunderstorm and its associated rainfall.
- **FACT:** Vehicles can provide safety during a thunderstorm! Just be sure to avoid touching any surfaces (such as metal) that may conduct electricity.
- **FICTION:** All lightning strike victims die. This is actually false, only about 10% of people struck by lightning are actually killed. However, most must cope with varying degrees of discomfort and disability, sometimes for the rest of their lives.
- **FICTION:** Lightning never strikes the same place twice. FALSE! Lightning often strikes the same place or object repeatedly, especially if it is tall, pointy, or isolated. For instance, the Empire State Building in New York City gets struck 100s of times a year!
- **FICTION:** Seeking shelter under a tree or in a low-lying area will keep you safe from lightning. FALSE! No place outside is safe during a thunderstorm! If caught outside, head to the nearest enclosed shelter, preferably with electrical wiring and plumbing fixtures.

### Safety Tips:

- **Stay away from windows and doors:** Lightning may strike a nearby object, and be transferred to you if you remain nearby. It is best to remain in an interior room during a thunderstorm.
- **Don't use a corded telephone:** Still have a landline telephone lying around? Energy from lightning strikes can be transferred to your body through telephone wires. However, it is safe to use a cordless telephone and/or cell phone during a thunderstorm.
- **Don't touch electrical equipment or cords:** Any equipment that uses electricity (i.e. computers, TVs, microwaves, appliances...etc.) is susceptible to lightning strikes and associated surges. Unplugging these devices or using a series of surge protectors is recommended.
- **Avoid taking showers/baths/swims:** Water and the plumbing that transports it are great conductors of electricity. Be sure to avoid any and all contact with it during an electrical storm.

# FLOOD WARNING

A Flood Warning is issued when flooding is **happening** or will happen soon. Some roads will be **flooded**.

**Move** to higher ground.

**Never drive** through flooded roads.

**take action.**

# FLOOD WATCH

A Flood Watch is issued when flooding is possible.

Stay tuned to radio/TV, follow **weather.gov** and be ready to seek higher ground.

Learn more at **weather.gov/flood**.

**be prepared.**



## Flooding

Flooding of all types is a year-round hazard across North Carolina, which has [a rich history](#) of both tropical and non-tropical type flooding events. Flash flooding is of particular concern during the severe weather season, as strong thunderstorms often produce high rainfall rates over an area for a prolonged period of time. Flash flooding is especially dangerous in urban areas (which exhibits greater runoff potential) and/or when it occurs at night (as it often can be hard to identify). Flooding typically ranks [near the top](#) of weather fatalities on any given year, many of which can be prevented through increased environmental understanding and careful planning! Before a flood occurs, it is important to:

- **Know your risk...** Does flooding occur often near your home or work?
- **Plan Ahead...** Where would you go if a flood were to occur? Where is your nearby higher ground?
- **Remain #WeatherAware...** Do you know the difference between a flood watch and warning? Do you have a way to be notified if flooding were to occur at night?



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[like this one from the National Weather Service in Raleigh!](#)