



MAFES Dawg Tracks



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*Safety Tips: Tornadoes
Preparedness*

Tornadoes, thunderstorms, lightning and straight-line winds. We all get to experience them either directly or indirectly. All of them can be deadly and a devastation to property. Obviously, we can't control them, but we can take precautions to be prepared in case one of them happens in our neighborhoods.

Tornadoes are dangerous severe storms with rotating winds that can exceed over 300 miles an hour. They usually are accompanied by hail, severe thunderstorms and oftentimes dangerous lightning. Flying debris can become deadly missiles that injure and kill. Most tornadoes move from southeast to northeast and generally occur in the spring. But as we have seen here in Mississippi, they can happen at any time.

TORNADO FACTS-

- ✓ They cause an average of 70 fatalities and 1500 injuries each year in the US.
- ✓ Can be 1 mile wide and stay on the ground for up to 50 miles.
- ✓ Their average forward speed is about 30 miles an hour but can vary from 0-70 miles an hour. **There are some things that we can do to at least prepare when the forecasts alert us that one could hit:**
- ✓ Keep your media sources open for warnings, such as:
 - ~**Tornado Watch** – Weather conditions are right for violent weather to form, such as tornadoes or severe thunderstorms.
 - ~**Tornado Warning** – This means that actual tornadoes (funnel-shaped clouds) have been detected by radar or sighted nearby. When a tornado warning has been issued, seek shelter immediately and stay there until the storm has passed.
- ✓ **Take shelter in a safe place** – A storm shelter is the ideal place to be, but we all don't have them. In your home, get in the middle of the home away from doors and windows or go to a bathroom and get in the tub; if possible, wrap yourself in blankets or other household fabrics and if you can handle it in time, have a mattress in the tub over your head. Refrain from taking shelter in a manufactured home. A tornado can pick it up and move it like a paper box.
- ✓ **No time to reach a shelter** – Get in a low depression, like a ditch, culvert or a slough. Cover your head with your hands. Refrain from taking cover in elevated structures.

Prior Preparedness-

- ✓ Have a radio with extra batteries (a NOAA radio is better).
- ✓ Listen to regular radio and the television for updates.
- ✓ Develop a family response plan and orient family members with it and practice it several times each year.
- ✓ Prepare emergency supply packets with all essentials for at least three days.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN THE EVENT OF A WARNING-

- In a home or building- move to a pre-designed shelter, such as a basement.
- If underground shelter isn't available, move to the middle of the structure or hallway and get under a piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- If you are in your car, don't try to outrun the tornado. Park it and seek cover in a low depression and away from standing structures or trees.
- In a manufactured home, get out and seek cover as mentioned above. Even with tie-downs, manufactured homes are dangerous.

Oftentimes tornadoes happen so quickly that there is no time for an advance warning, so it is imperative that you stay alert to the timing of the approaching conditions. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most deaths and injuries.

THUNDERSTORMS-

Thunderstorms affect relatively small areas compared to hurricanes and winter storms. A typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes. Despite their small size, all thunderstorms are dangerous. Every thunderstorm produces lightning. Lightning kills more people each year than tornadoes. Heavy rains can lead to flooding. Strong winds and hail can accompany thunderstorms.

ACTIONS TO TAKE-

Indoors:

- Remain calm
- Avoid water fixtures, telephone lines and any electrical conducting materials, such as computer network communication cables.

Outdoors:

- Go to the nearest ditch, slough or deep depression and lie down.
- Do not stand in an open area or underneath tree or structure.
- Stay away from metal objects and open bodies of water.
- If you are in motor vehicle, stay in the car. You're generally safer from lightning strikes in a motor vehicle since the rubber tires act as effective electrical insulators.

LIGHTNING-

Lightning causes an average of 60 fatalities and 300 injuries each year. Most lightning injuries and fatalities occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the afternoon and evening. It occurs in all thunderstorms and each year it strikes 25 million times in the US. The energy from 1 lightning strike will light a 100-watt bulb for 3 months. Lightning can occur from cloud to cloud, within a cloud, cloud to ground, and cloud to air.

The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000°F.- hotter than the surface of the sun. Many fires in the western US and Alaska are started by lightning. **One fact about straight-line winds: They are responsible for most thunderstorm damage. Their winds can exceed 100 miles per hour.**

**RESPECT THE WEATHER!
PREPARE & PREVENT
INSTEAD OF
REPAIR & REPENT**

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Excerpts: www.noaa.gov 2/1/2013
www.siue.edu/emergency/tornado