

Severe Weather Preparedness in Eastern North Carolina

Lightning: If you are outdoors and can hear thunder, you are in danger. Seek shelter in a building or vehicle with windows closed. Stay off of corded telephones. (Cordless or cellular telephones are safe.)

Flooding: Nearly half of all flash-flood fatalities are vehicle-related. Do not drive your vehicle onto a flooded road. The roadbed may not be stable. Turn around, don't drown.

Tornadoes: If a tornado warning is issued for your location, go to a well-constructed building and stay away from windows. A closet or other small enclosure near the center of the building on the lowest floor is safest. Put as many walls between you and the tornado as possible. Know in advance which room in your house is your best "tornado safe" room. Mobile homes and vehicles are not safe in a tornado.

Hurricanes and Tropical Storms in North Carolina are usually most severe in the state's coastal region, but hurricane-force winds have penetrated as far west as the NC mountains, and any tropical system can bring a risk of tornadoes and devastating flooding to all regions of the state.

- Expect stores and schools to be closed.
- Rainfall will be extreme and flooding of roads and low-lying areas will be common.
- Do not stay in a location that is known to flood during heavy rains.
- Ride out the storm in a well-constructed building. If you cannot evacuate the warned region, go to a designated public shelter if necessary. (Their locations will be announced in the local media.)
- Be prepared for lengthy power outages.
- Buy groceries and other needed provisions well before the storm sets in. Charge cellphone batteries fully before the storm begins.
- Trees will likely fall. Do not park your car under or near a tree; do not stay in any part of your house that is vulnerable to falling trees.
- Keep a portable radio and a supply of batteries with you at all times.

Before any protracted period of severe weather it is wise to obtain cash. Banks and ATMs may be inaccessible or inoperative during and after a storm. Fill your vehicle's gas tank. Keep a portable radio and a supply of batteries in your house.

Definitions of Important Bulletins Commonly Issued by the National Weather Service for Eastern North Carolina

REMEMBER

A **watch** means that conditions favor possible development of severe weather. Remain alert. Monitor local media. Prepare.

A **warning** means that severe weather is already occurring or is imminent. Take immediate action to ensure your safety.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms. Usually issued for a duration of 4 to 8 hours, and normally well in advance of the actual occurrence of severe weather. Severe thunderstorms bring hail one inch or larger in diameter, and/or winds of 58 miles per hour or greater. During a severe thunderstorm watch, review severe-weather safety rules, monitor local media for weather information, and be prepared to move quickly to a place of safety if threatening weather approaches.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Issued when a severe thunderstorm is already in or moving into the affected area. Expect hail 1 inch or larger in diameter, and/or winds of 58 miles per hour or greater. The threat is immediate and persons in the warned area should seek safe shelter without delay.

Tornado Watch: Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. Usually issued for a duration of 4 to 8 hours, and normally well in advance of the actual occurrence of severe weather. During a tornado watch, review tornado safety rules, monitor local media for weather information, be alert to rapidly changing weather conditions, and be prepared to move quickly to a place of safety if threatening weather approaches.

Tornado Warning: Issued when a tornado is already in or moving into the affected area. The threat is immediate and persons in the warned area should seek safe shelter without delay. Go to the lowest floor of a well-constructed building and stay away from windows. A closet or small room at the center of the building is best. Cars and mobile homes are not safe in a tornado.

Hurricane Watch: Issued when a tropical cyclone containing winds of 74 mph or higher poses a possible threat, generally within 48 hours. These winds may be accompanied by storm surge, coastal flooding, and/or river flooding. The watch does not mean that hurricane conditions definitely will occur. It only means that these conditions are possible.

Hurricane Warning: Issued when sustained winds of 74 mph or higher associated with a tropical cyclone are expected in 36 hours or less. These winds may be accompanied by storm surge, coastal flooding, and/or river flooding. A hurricane warning can remain in effect when dangerously high water or a combination of dangerously high water and exceptionally high waves continue, even though winds may be less than hurricane force.

A **Hurricane** is a tropical cyclone with highest sustained winds of 74 mph or higher. A **Tropical Storm** is a tropical cyclone with highest sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph.

The government's Weather Radio network broadcasts weather information 24 hours a day. These transmissions are found on special frequencies, and you must buy a Weather Radio receiver to hear them. Weather Radios are available in stores at prices starting around \$30. Weather Radios can give you the latest weather forecast at the touch of a button, or they can stand silent until an emergency bulletin is issued, which causes the radio to sound a "wake up" alarm, alerting you that there is an important message. For more information, see Fact Sheet "Why You Need A Weather Radio."