

Spring Preparedness

Are you ready for severe weather? Spring is upon us. It is time to review your severe weather plan: Where would you take shelter at home, work, school or while driving? The NWS encourages families to talk about their severe weather plan together.

According to the State of Illinois Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Illinois ranks fifth in the U.S. for the number of tornadoes per square mile. The majority of Illinois tornadoes have occurred between April 1 and June 30 between the hours of 3 and 10 p.m. However, tornadoes have happened nearly every month of the year and at nearly all hours of the day. In February 2017, a [tornado killed three people in LaSalle County](#). An average of 50 tornadoes occur each year in Illinois.

The IEMA also reminds residents to be sure to know the difference between a [tornado watch](#) and a tornado warning:

- Tornado Watch: This means tornadoes are possible near your area. Stay alert for the latest weather information. Be prepared to take shelter. If you live in a mobile home, this is the time to move to a more substantial structure. If you see any rotating funnel-shaped clouds, report them immediately by telephone to your local emergency management or law enforcement agency.
- Tornado Warning: This means a tornado has been sighted by someone or indicated by [weather radar](#). The storms may also produce damaging winds in excess of 60 mph and/or hail one inch or larger. Take shelter immediately. Turn on a battery-operated radio or television and wait for updated information for your area. Many smartphones automatically receive tornado warnings to alert you about a tornado nearby, even if you're traveling.

If the [forecast](#) indicates tornadoes are possible, families should monitor the radio, TV or Internet for the latest information. If the sirens go off:

- Go immediately to your predetermined shelter, such as a storm cellar, basement or the lowest level of the building. In a basement, go under the stairs, under a heavy piece of furniture or a work bench. Stay there until the danger has passed.
- If in a mobile home, get out and seek shelter elsewhere, well before the storm arrives. A mobile home can overturn very easily even if precautions have been taken to tie down the unit. If there is not a substantial shelter nearby, go to a low-lying area and shield your head with your hands.
- If there is no basement, go to an interior hallway or a small interior room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet. Stay away from outside windows and walls as they may be penetrated by high speed, wind-borne debris.
- Get under a piece of sturdy furniture, such as a workbench or heavy table, and hold onto it. If sturdy furniture is not available, make yourself the smallest target possible. Squat low to the ground. Put your head down and cover your head and neck with your hands.
- Use pillows, mattresses or cushions to protect your head and neck

Flood Safety

Your safety is important. Following these guidelines can help you stay safe during a flood.

- Listen to a radio or television for information
- Do not drive through a flooded area
- Do not walk through flowing water
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires
- Be alert to gas leaks
- Keep children away from the floodwaters, ditches, culverts and storm drains
- Clean everything that has been wet
- Do not use gas engines, such as generators or charcoal fires indoors during power outages