



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week #11 – March 14-18, 2022

Home Emergency Weather Preparedness

Natural and man-made disasters can strike at any time. Have your own emergency response plans when you're at work, at home, on vacation, or on the road. When you face a natural or man-made emergency, try to stay informed through the radio, TV, or Internet. In some cases, communication becomes nearly impossible when cable, electric, and cell phone services are disabled. This week, we will discuss weather preparedness in the home and the kinds of emergency supplies you should keep on hand.

Monday – Not one state in the continental U.S. has escaped the wrath of tornadoes. While tornadoes typically occur within the spring and summer months, they can strike at any time of the year. If a tornado is spotted or a tornado warning is issued:

- Seek shelter immediately. This includes basements, tunnels, interior corridors, and underground parking lots or subways.
- Avoid auditoriums, upper floors of buildings and houses, and trailers or parked vehicles. Stay away from all windows.
- If you are outside, lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area and protect your head. Stay away from poles or overhead lines.
- If you are driving, drive at right angles to the tornado's path. If you can't escape it, get out of the vehicle and seek a low-lying area.
- If you are at home, head for the basement and take cover under a heavy table or workbench. If you don't have a basement, go into a windowless room in the center of the house. Cover yourself with a rug or mattress for protection against glass and debris.
- Know the difference between a tornado watch (conditions are favorable for a tornado to form) and a warning (a tornado has been spotted in your area and you should take shelter immediately).

Tuesday – Hurricanes and tropical storms unlike tornadoes and earthquakes, are forecast ahead of landfall, giving residents time to take precautions. Hurricanes have wind speeds more than 75 mph and produce damage like tornadoes. But in addition to the wind, even small tropical storms can produce multiple feet of rain in less than a day, causing catastrophic flash flooding in areas that normally do not flood. If you are in the path of a hurricane:

- Board up windows and secure loose outdoor furniture.
- Know where to go in the event of an evacuation and how to get there. Establish an assembly point for family members to meet if separated, and choose one person everyone can contact with their whereabouts and status.
- If you are driving in heavy rain, try to safely exit the road, stay in the vehicle, and turn on emergency flashers. Never drive into flooded areas. Don't drown, turn around.
- Electrocutation is a real hazard in storm damaged areas. Avoid contact between electrical equipment, cords, metal, and water.
- Stay indoors until authorities tell you it's safe to go outside.
- Hurricanes can spawn tornadoes with stronger winds. Keep aware of tornado warnings.

Wednesday – Home Supplies: Every home should have an emergency supply kit located in an accessible storage area. It's best if you store the items in plastic containers that are easy to grab and carry. Check these kits every 6 months. Make sure everything is up to date and expired items are replaced. Home emergency supply kits should include:

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days (that's 12 gallons for a family of 4).
- Enough nonperishable food for at least three days and a can opener. Keep protein-packed foods like tuna, peanut butter, and granola bars. Don't forget about food for your pets!



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- Flashlights and hand or battery powered radios. Remember to include extra batteries.
- First aid kit with gauze, tape, bandages, antibiotic ointment, pain relievers, non-latex gloves, scissors, thermometer, tweezers, hand sanitizer, and instant cold compress.
- Tool kit with basic tools, in case you need to shut off utilities.

Thursday – Car Supplies: Every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit located in the trunk. Check these kits every 6 months. Make sure everything is up to date and expired items are replaced. Vehicle emergency supply kits should include:

- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench, and tripod jack.
- Jumper cables and a multipurpose utility tool.
- Flashlight with extra batteries and reflective triangles or brightly colored clothes for visibility. Consider adding a reflective vest as well and a poncho in case you need to get out in the rain for help.
- First aid kit (similar to the home kit described above).
- Drinking water and nonperishable, high-energy foods, such as unsalted nuts, dried fruits and hard candy.
- Car charger for your cell phone. It's also a good idea to keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company, in your phone.

Friday – Discussion: Has anyone here found themselves in the middle of a natural disaster? What did you do? What would you do differently now that you have this information?