

SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS

Severe local storms occur in all parts of the continental United States in an average year. Our community should be aware of severe weather terminology used by the National Weather Service.

A Watch – Conditions are favorable for severe weather in your area. Watches are issued for tornados, severe thunderstorms, and flash flooding.

A Warning – The severe weather event is imminent or occurring in the warned area. Warnings are issued for tornados, severe thunderstorms, flash floods, and river flooding.

Severe Thunderstorm – Is a storm that produces hail $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter or larger, and or gusty winds in excess of 58 mph or more.

Tornado – Is a violently rotating column of air attached to a thunderstorm and in contact with the ground.

Funnel Cloud – Is a rotating funnel-shaped cloud extending downward from a thunderstorm base.

Downburst – Is a strong downdraft with an out rush of damaging wind on or near the ground. These are not usually detectable by radar.

Flash Flood – Is a rapid rise in water, usually within 12 hours of a period of heavy rain or dam break.

Lightning is the number one threat to life in New Mexico. The following safety rules are important:

Lightning tends to strike the tallest object in an area, make sure it is not you.

Remain in your vehicle or an indoor location whenever possible.

If you must go outside, crouch down and make yourself a poor lightning target. Do not lie flat on the ground since you could be severely shocked if lightning strikes near you. Crouch as low as possible on the balls of your feet.

Tornado Safety

In the event of a tornado warning, go to your basement, and get under a heavy piece of furniture or the stairway. If you do not have a basement, go to the smallest room possible, as close to the center of the house as possible, that does not have outside doors or windows. (example hall way or small closet).

You may also use the bathroom, get in the bathtub and cover yourself with a mattress. If you live in a mobile or manufactured home, make arrangements

with other family, friends or neighbors, that have a basement or storm shelter.

Flash Floods

Do not attempt to drive or walk across a flooded roadway or low water crossing. Nearly half of all flash flood deaths are vehicle related. Moving water 2 feet deep will carry away most cars and trucks.

If your vehicle becomes caught in high water and stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground if you can do so safely. Rapidly rising water may sweep a vehicle and it's passengers away.

Be especially careful at night, when high water is harder to recognize.