

- **Learn about your community's warning system for severe thunderstorms.** Make sure all members of your household understand the system. Use a NOAA Weather Radio or listen to a local radio or television station to keep aware of watches and warnings while you are indoors. Make sure everyone in your household knows the name of the county or parish where you live because severe thunderstorm watches and warnings are issued for counties or parishes. People should also know the name of the county or parish they are in if they are away from home.
- **Learn how to crouch low to the ground on the balls of your feet.** Place your hands on your knees and your head between your knees. Minimize your body's surface area, and minimize your contact with the ground. Lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike.

Protect Your Property

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- **Actively prepare your home.**
- **Check your insurance coverage.**

You should:

- **Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a severe thunderstorm.** Having a list will help you remember things that may be broken or blown away in strong winds.
- **Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed.** Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Strong winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed.
- **Remove any debris or loose items from around your home and outbuildings and from pastures.** Branches and firewood may become missiles in strong winds.
- **Protect your animals.** Ensure that any outbuildings, pastures, or corrals that house animals are protected in the same way as your home. When installing or changing fence lines, consider placing them in such a way that your animals are able to move to higher ground in the event of flooding.
- **Consider installing permanent shutters to cover windows.** Shutters can be closed quickly and provide the safest protection for windows.
- **Install lightning rods on your home and on barns or any other building that house animals.** Lightning rods will carry the electrical charge of lightning bolts safely to the ground, greatly reducing the chance of a lightning-induced fire.
- **Insure crops against financial loss from storm damage through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.** If applicable, it is recommended that you obtain separate specific insurance to cover your crops. Losses are not covered through usual insurance policies. Each year, severe storms cause millions of dollars in crop damage. Hail, in particular, has been known to wipe out entire fields.