

What to Do Before a Severe Thunderstorm

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Stay informed.
- Prepare to shelter.

You should:

- **Use a NOAA Weather Radio to keep you informed of watches and warnings issued in your area.**
- **If planning a trip or extended period of time outdoors, be aware of the weather forecast.** Knowing what the weather could be will help you be prepared to respond if necessary. Having a raincoat, umbrella, and disaster supplies kit available will make it easier to deal with severe weather if it occurs.
- **Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent.** Coaches of outdoor sports teams should use a NOAA Weather Radio during practice sessions and games. Threatening weather can endanger athletes, staff, and spectators. Remember that many people struck by lightning are not in an area where rain is falling. Postponing activities is your best way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- **Keep an eye on the sky.** Pay attention to weather clues around you that may warn of imminent danger. Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind, which may be signs of an approaching thunderstorm.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Look for places you could go if severe weather threatens.
- **Listen for the sound of thunder.** If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- **Even if there is no official thunderstorm warning, if you see signs of a thunderstorm, take precautions.**

What to Do During a Severe Thunderstorm Watch

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Keep informed.
- Prepare to shelter.
- Avoid lightning attractors.

You should:

- **Use a NOAA Weather Radio or listen to a local radio or television station.** Local authorities will provide you with the best information for your particular situation.
- **Avoid natural lightning rods, such as golf clubs, fishing poles, tractors, bicycles, and camping equipment.** Lightning is attracted to metal and poles or rods.
- **Be prepared to take shelter.** A sturdy building is the safest place to be during a severe thunderstorm. Avoid gazebos, rain or picnic shelters, golf carts, baseball dugouts, bleachers, and other isolated structures in otherwise open areas because such places are often struck by lightning. In addition, gazebos and picnic shelters are often poorly anchored and subject to being uprooted and blown around in strong thunderstorm winds. They also offer little protection from large hail.