

# SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

Illinois has more than 550 reports of wind damage and large hail, on average, every year. Too often, people ignore severe thunderstorms, because they believe only a tornado will cause damage or threaten their lives. The fact is a majority of the property damage and injuries from thunderstorms each year is from high thunderstorm winds and large hail – not tornadoes.



## BEFORE SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

Know the terms used to describe severe thunderstorm threats:

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** -- Severe thunderstorms are possible in or near your area. Stay alert for the latest weather information. Be prepared to take shelter.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** -- Severe thunderstorms will be approaching or are occurring. Severe thunderstorms produce damaging wind in excess of 60 mph and/or hail 1.00” in diameter or larger. Seek safe shelter. Keep in mind that winds from a severe thunderstorm can cause significant property damage, injury or even death – even though there is no tornado present.

**Significant Weather Advisory** – Strong thunderstorms with wind gusts of 40 to 55 mph and/or hail less than 1.00” in diameter will be approaching or are occurring.

- **Wind gusts from severe thunderstorms can do as much or more damage than many tornadoes!** Extended power outages, downed trees and extensive damage to roofs, doors and windows can all occur from straight line wind gusts or downbursts of wind.
- **Check the weather forecast** before leaving for extended outdoor periods and postpone plans if severe weather is imminent.

## DURING SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

- **Stay away from all windows and doors during the storm.** If you can do it safely, draw the shades or blinds to reduce the risk from flying glass if it breaks due to high winds.
- **Monitor the radio or television** for the latest weather information.
- **Avoid using a corded telephone or other electrical appliances** until the storm passes.

- **Turn off air conditioners.** If lightning strikes, a power surge could damage the compressor.
- **Delay taking baths or showers** until after the storm passes due to the lightning threat.
- **If outdoors, seek shelter IMMEDIATELY!** If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning.
- **If you are driving, pull safely to the shoulder away from trees and power lines.** Lightning can flash from trees or power poles and strike a vehicle. The rubber tires do NOT keep lightning from striking a vehicle. Normally, in the open, a vehicle is a safe shelter from lightning. Avoid touching metal parts of the vehicle when lightning is nearby.
- **If you are in a boat** when a thunderstorm threatens, **you should attempt to reach shore as quickly as possible.**
- If you find yourself in a position where there is **no immediate shelter available, find a low spot away from trees and power poles.**

### **AFTER SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS**

- **Monitor the radio or television** for emergency information or instructions.
- **Check for injured victims.** Render first aid if necessary.
- **Most lightning strike victims can be revived with CPR.** Do not attempt to move severely injured victims unless absolutely necessary. Wait for emergency medical assistance to arrive.
- **Take photos or video of any damage to your home or property,** and report it to local emergency managers.
- **Do not make unnecessary telephone calls.**
- **If driving, be alert for hazards on the roadway.**
- **Check on neighbors or relatives** who may require special assistance.