

Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Albany NY
800 AM EDT Mon Apr 20 2026

...Severe Weather Awareness Week Continues...

April 19 to April 25 is Severe Weather Awareness Week in New York and New England.

Eastern New York and western New England get their share of severe weather. In an average year, about nine tornadoes occur in New York, another eight occur across New England, and hundreds of severe thunderstorms rumble across the Northeast. Today we review severe weather terms and definitions.

Severe thunderstorms are defined as those thunderstorms that produce winds of 58 mph or greater and or hail of one inch in diameter or larger. A severe thunderstorm watch means that severe thunderstorms are possible over the next several hours. You should continue with your daily routine, but be prepared to move to a place of safety should a severe thunderstorm warning be issued. A severe thunderstorm warning means that severe thunderstorms are imminent or occurring. You should seek shelter immediately when a severe thunderstorm warning is issued.

Every thunderstorm contains deadly lightning. There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of a storm. When thunder roars, go indoors.

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air in contact with the ground and attached to the cloud base above. Like a severe thunderstorm watch, a tornado watch means that tornadoes are possible over the next several hours. A tornado warning means that a tornado is imminent or occurring. When a warning is issued, take shelter in a basement or interior room immediately.

Flash flooding is a rapid rise of water along a stream, or in a low lying or urban area. The most common cause of flash flooding is downpours from thunderstorms. A flood watch means that conditions are favorable for flash flooding. Continue with your daily activities, but be prepared to avoid low-lying areas when a flash flood warning is issued. A flash flood warning means that flooding is imminent or occurring. Flood waters can rise rapidly. Seek high ground immediately when a flash flood warning is issued, and never drive through flood waters.

The National Weather Service issues severe thunderstorm, tornado and flash flood warnings for small areas likely to be impacted by the storm. This method narrows the area for which a warning is valid, eliminating unnecessary alerting where no threat exists.

NOAA Weather Radio offers one way to receive immediate relay of severe weather warnings. Many local television and radio stations also broadcast weather alerts. Rechargeable radios with NOAA weather radio and AM and FM are available. Computers and wireless devices can also receive warnings including warnings that alert you to lightning in your area.

Finally, help make the United States a weather ready nation. Share this information with everyone you know.

Tomorrow we will discuss severe thunderstorms.

NWS Albany