Severe Weather Safety Tips For Campers

Tornadoes, Lightning, High Winds, Floods
Reducing the Risk Posed by Severe Weather

A Strategy to Lessen the Impact

1. Alertness. Make sure you get the warning

2. Awareness: Knowing what precautions to take and how to respond to the threat.
Some Basic Definitions:

**Watch**: Conditions are favorable. Be Alert! Have a means to receive warnings.

**Warning**: It is occurring or is expected shortly. Take Action!

**Severe Thunderstorm**: Storm that produces one or more of the following: Wind greater than 50 knots (58 mph), hail 1 inch or larger, a tornado.

**Flash Flood**: A flood with a rapid onset, generally less than six hours.
Getting the Warnings and Forecasts:

**NOAA Weather Radio:** [http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/)

For wireless devices: [http://mobile.weather.gov/](http://mobile.weather.gov/)
Thunderstorm Threats

- Tornadoes
- Downbursts ("straight line winds")
- Large Hail
- Heavy Rain and Flash Flooding
- Lightning
High Wind Threats: Flying Debris, Falling Trees

Winds in a Microburst can be over 100 mph.
Spring Lake Subdivision: hit by 120 mph microburst on 5/31/1998
Safety Tips for Downbursts

Get Away From Trees

• Leave tents, cars and campers
• Get inside a sturdy shelter
• If none is available, seek a sheltered area away from trees
• Cars are better than nothing, but avoid parking near trees
Tornado Threats: Flying Debris, collapsing buildings

Airborne missiles up to the size of automobiles.
Tornado damage: what if this was your campground?
Safety Tips for Tornadoes

Get to a Sturdy Structure

• Get below ground: a storm shelter or basement.
• If no basement, find a small interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building.
• Leave cars. They will go airborne in strong tornadoes.
• If caught in the open, hit the dirt! Find a ditch or culvert and protect your head and torso.
• Highway overpasses should be avoided.
Lightning: The Most Common Threat
If Outdoors:
• Get Indoors.
• Do not stand near tall trees or metal objects.
• If boating or swimming, head for shore.
• Avoid high elevations.
• If caught in the open, crouch down until there is a break in the storm.

If Indoors:
• Avoid running water, electrical appliances.
• Get off corded phones.
Flash Flood Threats: Washed out, flooded Roads

Only a few inches of flowing water can mean BIG trouble.
Safety Tips for Flash Floods

Your car makes a lousy boat

• Never attempt to cross a flooded road.
• Avoid low ground and areas subject to flooding.
• Be especially cautious at night.
National Weather Service Grand Rapids

Web site:
www.weather.gov/grr/

We need ground truth! Check web site for information on how to become a SKYWARN weather spotter.