Preparedness Framework for Severe Weather
PPMA

• Plan
  – Home, work, school, outdoor activities
  – Identify safe areas
  – Have a disaster kit
  – Know how to stay weather aware
• Practice! Practice! Practice!
• Monitor
  – Weather Watcher
  – Multiple ways to receive warnings
• Act
  – When severe weather threatens
  – Activate your plan!
Three Basic Things to Include in Your Severe Weather Safety Plan
- Where to Shelter
- How to Reach Each Other (communication)
- Meet-up spot if You Get Separated

Knowing Important Sources of Weather Information
- NWS Chicago Weather Watcher Page
- Watches and Warnings

Have Multiple Ways to Get Weather Information
Ensure Wireless Emergency Alerts are Enabled on Smartphone
“Get In, Get Down, Cover Up”

Self-Assessment: Can you check all five boxes?
SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY PLAN

Three basic things everyone in your home or business should know...

1. Pick A Spot
   Find a safe, interior room, preferably the lowest level in the building, and let everyone know that's where they should go during severe weather.

2. How To Get In Touch
   Everyone should know how to reach one another afterwards. In disasters, texting is often better than calling.

3. Choose a “Meet Up Spot”
   It's a good idea to have a standard meet up spot that everyone knows.

@NWSChicago  Web: weather.gov/Chicago
Designate a Weather Watcher

- Checks forecast and monitors conditions when threatening weather is possible
- Ideally has the authority to enact the severe weather plan or has direct contact with decision maker
- Knowledgeable of forecast information
- [www.weather.gov/chicago/wx_watcher](http://www.weather.gov/chicago/wx_watcher)
Weather Watcher Page
www.weather.gov/lot/wxWatcher

NWS Chicago
Decision Support
Briefing

Current Conditions | General Forecast | Thunderstorms | Hydrology/Rivers | Winter Weather

Hazards Planning
- Latest Hazardous Weather Outlook
- Enhanced Hazardous Weather Outlook for Northern Illinois and Northwest Indiana
- Latest Area Forecast Discussion

Latest Watches and Warnings

Select Tab

Northern Illinois and Northwest Indiana Watches and Warnings Map

US SPC Day 1 Convective Outlook, Current Watches, and Radar

Latest Weather Story and Graphicast

Chicago Light Snow Develops
Some Sun Early this AM
Key Pieces of Weather Info on Weather Watcher Page

What is the weather going to do? Do I need to be concerned?

1. Hazardous Weather Outlook

Text

WEATHER HAZARDS EXPECTED:
THUNDERSTORMS...SOME MAY BE SEVERE AND PRODUCE:
- Locally heavy rainfall resulting in localized flooding.
- Hail up to the size of quarters.
- Damaging winds up to 70 mph.
- Frequent cloud to ground lightning.
- And possibly an isolated tornado.

AREAS AFFECTED AND TIMING:
A COLD FRONT WILL SLOW WEST TO EAST ACROSS NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND NORTHWEST INDIANA LATE THIS AFTERNOON THROUGH THE EVENING.

DISCUSSION:
A COLD FRONT WILL SLOW ACROSS THE REGION THIS EVENING BRINGING PRELIMINARILY A THREAT FOR STRONG AND DAMAGING WINDS ALONG WITH A CONCERN FOR A TORNADO. AHEAD OF THE MAIN LINE OF THUNDERSTORMS...SCATTERED THUNDERSTORMS ARE POSSIBLE LATE THIS AFTERNOON INTO THE EARLY EVENING. THE SEVERE WEATHER THREAT SHOULD DECREASE QUICKLY AROUND THE FRONT. IN ADDITION TO THE SEVERE WEATHER THREAT...SOME AREAS HAVE ALREADY SEEN HEAVY RAIN TODAY WITH SOILS SATURATED. ADDITIONAL HEAVY RAIN WILL QUICKLY BE CONVERTED TO RUNOFF WITH A CONCERN FOR AT LEAST LOCALIZED FLOODING.

...DAYS TWO THROUGH SEVEN...FRIDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY.
THERE IS A CHANCE OF THUNDERSTORMS LATE SUNDAY AFTERNOON INTO SUNDAY NIGHT...AND AGAIN TUESDAY NIGHT THROUGH THURSDAY.

SPOTTER INFORMATION STATEMENT...
SPOTTER ACTIVATION WILL LIKELY BE NEEDED THROUGH TONIGHT.

Graphical

2. SPC Outlooks

Click EHWO Tab

3. Weather Story
NWS Chicago Social Media

- Facebook, Twitter & YouTube
- Providing up to date information on Facebook & Twitter.
- Routine useful information, graphical displays and interaction.
- Caution: Frequency of updates posted to this feed may vary and followers should not rely on this service as their primary means of hazardous weather notification.

Example of warnings posted to social media
- Warnings post automatically to Twitter
How to Make Sure You See Our Facebook Posts!

4 Steps You Can Take

1. Go to our Facebook Page  Search: NWSChicago
   https://www.facebook.com/NWSChicago

   ✓ Check directly on our page for updates before and during hazardous weather
   ✓ Refresh the page often

2. Find the 📣 Liked button
   Change this setting from Default to See First

3. Find the 📣 Liked button
   Change Notifications from All Off to settings below

4. Set your News Feed to Most Recent

   On Personal Computer

   On Mobile
Experimental Mobile Optimized Widget

The closest the NWS has to an app!

Enable location on your device

Set as icon on your home screen

http://innovation.srh.noaa.gov/NWSwidget

Google NWS Widget
mobile.weather.gov

Set as icon on your home screen
# How the National Weather Service Defines Thunderstorm Strength

## General
- No hail
- Winds 45 mph or less

## Strong
- Hail up to nickels
- Winds 45 to 57 mph
- Heavy downpours

## Severe
- Tornadoes
- Hail 1” or larger
- Winds 58 mph or greater

## Significant Severe
- Strong tornadoes
- Hail 2” or larger
- Winds 75 mph or greater

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The NWS will only issue warnings when a thunderstorm is severe.
# Understanding Severe Weather Outlooks

Issued by the Storm Prediction Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THUNDERSTORMS (no label)</th>
<th>1 - MARGINAL (MRGL)</th>
<th>2 - SLIGHT (SLGT)</th>
<th>3 - ENHANCED (ENH)</th>
<th>4 - MODERATE (MDT)</th>
<th>5 - HIGH (HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No severe* thunderstorms expected</td>
<td>Isolated severe thunderstorms possible</td>
<td>Scattered severe storms possible</td>
<td>Numerous severe storms possible</td>
<td>Widespread severe storms likely</td>
<td>Widespread severe storms expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightning/flooding threats exist with all thunderstorms</td>
<td>Limited in duration and/or coverage and/or intensity</td>
<td>Short-lived and/or not widespread, isolated intense storms possible</td>
<td>More persistent and/or widespread, a few intense</td>
<td>Long-lived, widespread and intense</td>
<td>Long-lived, very widespread and particularly intense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Winds to 40 mph**
- **Small hail**
- **Winds 40-60 mph**
- **Hail up to 1”**
- **Low tornado risk**
- **One or two tornadoes**
- **Reports of strong winds/wind damage**
- **Hail ~1”, isolated 2”**
- **A few tornadoes**
- **Several reports of wind damage**
- **Damaging hail, 1 - 2”**
- **Strong tornadoes**
- **Widespread wind damage**
- **Destructive hail, 2” +**
- **Tornado outbreak**
- **Derecho**

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**Low Impact**

**Dangerous**

**Deadly**

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[Weather-Ready Nation](https://weather.gov/tornado)

SPC Outlooks: Forecasts for organized severe thunderstorms over the U.S.
WATCH VS. WARNING

Do YOU know the difference?

WATCH

BE ALERT. Severe storms or tornadoes MIGHT form and affect your area.

WARNING

TAKE ACTION! A severe storm or tornado is expected in your area.

You should be...

Keep an eye on the sky

Monitoring information

ACT IMMEDIATELY. GET IN, GET DOWN, AND COVER UP.

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Don’t just rely on one method of receiving weather info. Plan for things like power outages, poor reception, etc.

HAVE MULTIPLE WAYS TO GET WEATHER INFO

- Battery powered radio
- Internet
- Phone
- Television
- NOAA Weather Radio

@NWSChicago    Web: weather.gov/Chicago
WEA is... Wireless Emergency Alert

• Automatic, text-like message informing you of dangerous situations
• No charges to receive a WEA message
• WEA messages have a special tone and vibration

If you...
✓ Have WEA messages enabled
✓ And are by a cell tower covering a Tornado (Flash Flood) Warning polygon

You will automatically receive message telling you of a Tornado (Flash Flood) Warning.

Go to...
www.ctia.org/wea

Check to see if your phone is WEA-Capable

IS YOUR PHONE WEA READY?

@NWSChicago  Web: weather.gov/Chicago
NOAA Weather Radio

“Why would you live in the bullseye of severe weather without one?”

Receive weather information 24-hours a day

Radio will sound a loud alarm to alert you when a watch or warning has been issued for YOUR county

weather.gov/lot/NWR
When a TORNADO WARNING is Issued

“Get In, Get Down, Cover Up”

1. Get In
Get into a sturdy building and put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.

2. Get Down
Get as low in the building as possible – the basement or the lowest floor.

3. Cover Up
Flying and falling debris are a storm’s number one killer. Use pillows, blankets, helmets, etc. to cover up and protect yourself.

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When a TORNADO WARNING is Issued

HIGHWAY OVERPASSES ARE NOT SAFE SHELTER!

Why you should never take shelter under a highway overpass:

- You’re exposed to higher wind speeds with no protection
- Wind and flying debris become channeled underneath
- Your parked car could block traffic and put others at risk

Don’t try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle in an urban area. Tornadoes can move 60 mph+.

As a last resort, lie flat in a ditch or low spot. A bridge does not offer protection from a tornado.

Plan ahead so you do not get into this situation.
We Have A Plan Too!

- Neighboring offices can provide back-up
- Reinforced shelter
- Routine practice
- Executed plan 8/18/2015
We Practice What We Advocate!

Tornado Warning included NWS Chicago office on 8/18/15

Backup procedures implemented in SECONDS.

NWS Lincoln updated Tornado Warning while NWS Chicago staff took cover in tornado shelter.

After it was safe, normal operations returned at NWS Chicago.
More Information

- NWS Chicago Severe Preparedness Page
  www.weather.gov/chicago/severeprepare
- Make a plan
  www.ready.gov/make-a-plan
- Basic disaster supplies kit
  www.ready.gov/kit
- NWS Chicago Weather Watcher Page
  www.weather.gov/chicago/wx_watcher
- WRN Ambassador
  www.weather.gov/com/weatherreadynation/ambassadors.html
- Storm Ready
  www.stormready.noaa.gov