

# Severe Weather

Severe weather that includes tornadoes, lightning, flooding, storms, etc., is prevalent during the spring and summer in Indiana. Thunderstorms can produce large hail, flash floods, heavy rain, lightning and strong winds. They can also produce tornadoes which can have wind speeds in excess of 300 mph, be more than a mile wide and cover approximately 50 miles while destroying property. Thunderstorms, flash floods and tornadoes can all appear suddenly with little warning, and may only last a few minutes, but have the strength and power to cause a great amount of damage.

## Before Severe Weather Strikes:

- ◆ Keep trees trimmed to prevent limbs from falling onto buildings, cars or people.
- ◆ If hail or strong winds are expected, park vehicle under a shelter to avoid damage.
- ◆ Contact insurance provider to purchase flood insurance.
- ◆ Be aware of flood plains or areas that repetitively flood in the area.
- ◆ If in a flood plain, put hot water heaters, electrical panels and furnaces away from the ground.
- ◆ Have basements waterproofed.
- ◆ If flooding is possible, try to create a barrier between homes and the water.
- ◆ In case of evacuation, make sure that preparedness kits are portable.



## During Severe Weather:

- ◆ Postpone or cancel outdoor activities and monitor weather reports on radio, television websites and social media.
- ◆ For lightning, shelter inside a building or hardtop vehicle, but do not touch the metal inside.
- ◆ Do NOT go near isolated tall trees or any other tall objects, or near downed power lines.
- ◆ Do NOT stop at underpasses. Wind speeds increase and can cause serious injuries.
- ◆ If tornados are expected while in a vehicle, get out and take shelter in a strong building if possible.
- ◆ During tornado warnings, mobile home residents need to evacuate immediately. Shelter in a building with a strong foundation.
- ◆ If caught out in the middle of a body of water, return to shore as soon as possible.
- ◆ Basements, inner rooms and storm cellars provide the best protection during a thunderstorm or tornado. Stay in the center of the room, away from doors and windows.

## Evacuating:

- ◆ If flooding is possible, evacuate the house and get to higher ground. Know the area and make sure to know alternate escape routes in case one is blocked.
- ◆ Take pets, however, shelters may NOT allow pets inside due to sanitary conditions, so plan accordingly.
- ◆ Do NOT try to drive through water. As little as a few inches of moving water can wash most cars away with the current.
- ◆ Do NOT try to cross moving water on foot. As little as a few inches can knock adults off their feet.

## Things to know:

- ◆ Watch: conditions are favorable for a thunderstorm, flood or tornado.
- ◆ Warning: a thunderstorm, flood or tornado is occurring or is likely to occur soon.

## After Severe Weather:

- ◆ If injured, seek necessary medical care.
- ◆ Help others who may be trapped or injured, if it can be done safely.
- ◆ Stay out of damaged buildings and any building surrounded by flood water.
- ◆ Avoid entering ANY building (home, business, etc.) until local officials indicate it is safe.
- ◆ Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities.
- ◆ Wear sturdy shoes and use extreme caution when entering buildings.
- ◆ Use battery powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.
- ◆ Watch for loose plaster, drywall and ceilings that could fall.
- ◆ Look for fire hazards and beware of possible water, gas or oil leaks.
- ◆ Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into buildings with the floodwaters.



## After Returning Home:

- ◆ Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
- ◆ Throw away food that has come into contact with floodwater.
- ◆ Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.
- ◆ Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible.
- ◆ Contact the local health department before making repairs to septic systems.

