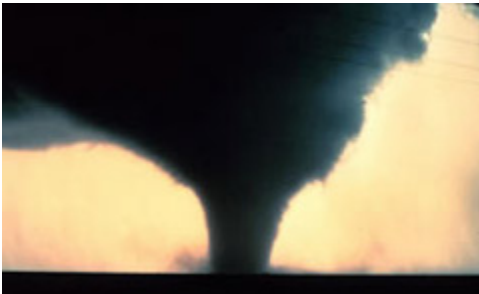


# Severe Weather Awareness

Texas is always susceptible to severe weather and damaging storms that threaten lives and property. Whether its tornados, severe thunderstorms, lightning, or floods, stay informed and protect yourself against potential severe weather threats in your area.

## Tornado Safety Tips

More tornadoes strike Texas than any other state. They can occur at any time of year, including winter, but are most frequent from mid-March through May. Tornadoes are also a common occurrence during hurricanes. Take the following precautions during tornadic activity:



- Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor of your home, such as a bathroom, closet or room without windows. Cover yourself with a mattress or cushions.
- In an office building, go to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- If you are in a mobile home, get out and take shelter in a nearby building. If no shelter is available, lie flat in a ditch or ravine.
- **Never** stay inside a car! Get out and lie flat in a ditch or a ravine. If a building is nearby, take shelter inside. Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- At school, follow plans and go to a designated shelter area, usually interior hallways on the lowest floor. Avoid auditoriums, gyms and areas with wide, free-span roofs.
- In a shopping center, move towards the interior away from exterior glass walls.
- If you are in open country, take cover in a low spot away from trees.
- Remember there is a difference between a **Tornado Watch** and a **Tornado Warning**. A Tornado Watch means tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. A Tornado Warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar, and you must **seek shelter immediately!**

## Severe Thunderstorm and Lightning Safety Tips

Texas ranks among the top states for lightning fatalities each year. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from a storm, and may be conducted through a number of surfaces including the ground. A direct strike is not necessary for severe injury or death to occur. Individuals in the general vicinity of a strike may experience minor to significant side effects from a strike, such as brain or cardiac damage. Always seek immediate shelter when storms approach. Remember, when thunder roars, go indoors!

Take the following precautions during thunderstorm and lightning activity:

- When severe storms threaten, the safest place to be is indoors.
- If you are outdoors, seek shelter in a home, large building or automobile. Do not take shelter in sheds, pavilions, tents, dugouts, or other small, open sided buildings.
- Do not take shelter under isolated trees, cliffs, or rocky overhangs.
- If you are in a vehicle roll up your windows.
- Avoid high objects that may attract lightning. Stay away from tall isolated trees, telephone poles, or communications antennas.
- Avoid being taller than your surroundings by standing on an open hilltop.
- Avoid plumbing, including sinks and faucets. Do not take a shower or bath during a lightning storm.
- Stay away from concrete floors and walls.
- Do not use the telephone unless you have a true emergency.
- If lightning begins while you are swimming or boating, get out of the water.
- If outdoors, avoid contact with metal surfaces and do not carry anything made of metal. Stay away from metal fencing and pipes, as these objects are conductors of electricity. Also, avoid contact with metal farm equipment or small metal vehicles (such as golf carts).

## Flash Flood Safety Tips

Flash flooding is the number one weather-related killer in Texas. Nearly 50 percent of all flash flood fatalities nationwide involve vehicles. Saving your life can be as easy as turning your car around when you see water on the road. Never attempt to drive through flooded roadways – Turn Around Don't Drown (TADD).



REMEMBER:

- Even in relatively shallow water, tires can act as flotation devices, lifting up big vehicles and sending them downstream. It takes only two feet of water to float a 3,000-pound car.
- Beware that water covering roadways may hide washed-out bridges or gouged-out roadbeds. If you attempt to drive across, you may not be driving on a road.
- In rainy weather, be alert and stay tuned to local radio or TV.
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- If you are in a low-lying area when flooding is occurring, get to higher ground quickly. Be sure to avoid canyons and washes that can channel swift water.
- Do not attempt to cross-flooded roads or streams on foot. It can take as little as six inches of water to knock an adult off his or her feet. Furthermore, water may be flowing more rapidly than it appears.
- **Never** allow children to play near ditches and storm drains.
- During stormy weather, do not camp or park vehicles along streams or washes.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to see flood dangers.

## **Always Be Prepared**

Always be prepared for any severe weather or emergency that may arise. Preparing and maintaining an emergency supply kit is a simple and effective way to sustain you and your family following a disaster. Developing an emergency plan for you and your family is another way to protect yourself should a disaster occur.

More information about TADD can be found at: [www.nws.noaa.gov/os/water/tadd/](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/water/tadd/)

For more information on emergency supply kits visit: [www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/Preparedness/emerSupplyKits.htm](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/Preparedness/emerSupplyKits.htm).

Additional information on emergency planning is available at:  
[www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/Preparedness/emerPlanningTips.htm](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/Preparedness/emerPlanningTips.htm).

For more information about severe weather awareness and building community resiliency, you can visit NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation website: [www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/).