

Severe Weather Preparedness Week

Information provided by:

Indiana Department of Homeland Security

District 7 Public Information and Crisis
Communication Team

Governor Daniels Proclamation

Governor Daniels has proclaimed the week
of March 13, 2011 as Severe Weather
Preparedness Week

Severe Weather in Indiana

In Indiana, severe weather occurs most often from April to July and can take place any time of the day or night.

Thunderstorms can produce large hail, flash floods, heavy rain, lightning, strong winds, and tornadoes that can reach speeds in excess of 300 mph and be more than a mile wide.

All of these can 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.



Preparing

Please take the time to review the following information about severe weather, thunderstorms, tornadoes and flooding. Visit the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Family Preparedness page and fill out your personal family preparedness plan. Preparing for severe weather is the best way to ensure that you and your family stay safe and minimize damage to your property.

Are You Ready?

- **Get a Kit:** Could you and your family survive after a major disaster without access to transportation, or major utilities? What will you eat and drink, and what will you use for light? Do you have enough essential medications, baby formula, and other special needs items to last at least three days? Is your first aid kit replenished?
- **Make a plan:** Do you and your family members all know how to escape if your home catches fire, or where to go if a tornado is threatening your area? How you will communicate and where will your family reunite if you are separated during an emergency? What you will do if you child's school or daycare facility closes. If you must evacuate during a flash flood or other disaster, do you know the best routes?
- **Be Informed:** Is your home or office located in a flood plain or are you downstream from a major dam? Will you know if a severe thunderstorm is headed your way in the middle of the night? What is the difference between a tornado WATCH and a WARNING? Do you know which neighbors with small children, or other special needs family members might need help during a natural or manmade disaster?
- **Get Involved:** Once you and your family are prepared for emergency situations, go out and teach someone about preparedness. Business and school officials should incorporate emergency plans into employee handbooks and standard curriculums. Families should have preparedness meetings and form networks.

Watches and Warnings

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

Before Severe Weather Strikes

- **Keep trees trimmed to avoid falling onto buildings, cars or people**
- **If hail or strong winds are reported, park your vehicle under a shelter to avoid damage**
- **Contact your insurance provider if you are in a flood plain. Many insurance companies do not include flood damage unless you ask**
- **If in a flood plain, put hot water heaters, electrical panels, and furnaces away from the ground**
- **When making a disaster kit, make sure you can take it with you in case of evacuation**
- **Have basements waterproofed**
- **If flooding is possible, try to create a barrier between your house and the water**

During Severe Weather

- **Postpone or cancel outdoor activities and listen to weather reports on the radio or television**
- **Seek shelter inside a building or in a hardtop vehicle, but do not touch the metal inside**
- **Do NOT go near tall trees or any other tall objects, or near downed power lines**
- **Do NOT go under overpasses. Wind speeds increase and can cause serious injuries**
- **If in a vehicle, get out and go into a strong building if possible. If not, lie in a flat ditch or low area and cover your head. Be aware of low lying areas that may flood**
- **If you live in a mobile home, get out 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**

Flood Evacuation

- **If flooding is possible, evacuate your house and get to higher ground**
- **Know your town and make sure you know alternate escape routes in case one is blocked**
- **Take pets with you if you evacuate. However, many shelters usually do 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 drive through water rushing over a roadway. It can easily sweep your car away**
- **Do NOT try to cross moving water on foot. As little as a few inches can knock you off your feet**

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are very prevalent during the summer months in Indiana. They can produce large hail, flash floods, heavy rain, lightning, strong winds, and tornadoes. Thunderstorms can last only a few minutes, but have the strength and power to cause a great amount of damage.

Before a Thunderstorm:

- Keep trees trimmed to avoid falling onto your house, cars, or even yourself
- If hail or strong winds are reported park your vehicle under a shelter, if possible, to avoid hail and debris damage

During a Thunderstorm:

- If a thunderstorm is coming postpone or cancel outdoor activity
- Do NOT go near tall trees or any other tall objects
- Seek shelter inside a building or in a hardtop vehicle, but don't touch any of the metal inside
- Do NOT use the telephone. Stay away from other electronic devices, bare metal, and water
- Do NOT go near downed power lines
- Keep your eye on the sky and listen to weather reports on the radio or TV
- If caught out in the middle of a large body of water, return to shore as soon as possible. Get off the water immediately
- When caught in the middle of an open field: If walking with others stay a minimum of 10 feet apart, keep low and move quickly to seek shelter. If there is no shelter lay in a ditch or get to the lowest place around

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are violent rotating cylinders of air that can reach speeds in excess of 300 mph, be more than a mile wide, and cover up to around 50 miles during their short path of destruction. Tornadoes can cause millions of dollars worth of damage and rip buildings off their foundations leaving only debris in their wake. They can appear suddenly and with little warning.

During a Tornado:

- Basements, inner rooms of a house, and storm cellars provide the best protection
- Stay away from exterior walls, windows, and doors. Stay in the center of the room
- If you are in your car do **NOT** try and outrun the tornado because it can switch direction and can cover lots of ground quickly
- Get out of vehicle and go into a strong building if possible. If not, lie flat in a ditch or low area and cover your head
- Do **NOT** go under overpasses, wind speeds actually increase under them and can suck you out!
- If you live in a mobile home, get out **IMMEDIATELY**. Take shelter in a building with a strong foundation
- Listen to radio or watch TV so you can be alerted about your current situation

After a Tornado:

- Stay out of damaged buildings
- Help others that might be trapped or injured
- Listen to radio or TV to find out emergency information and instructions for your area
- Stay away from downed power lines
- Be aware of possible water, gas, or oil leaks

After Severe Weather

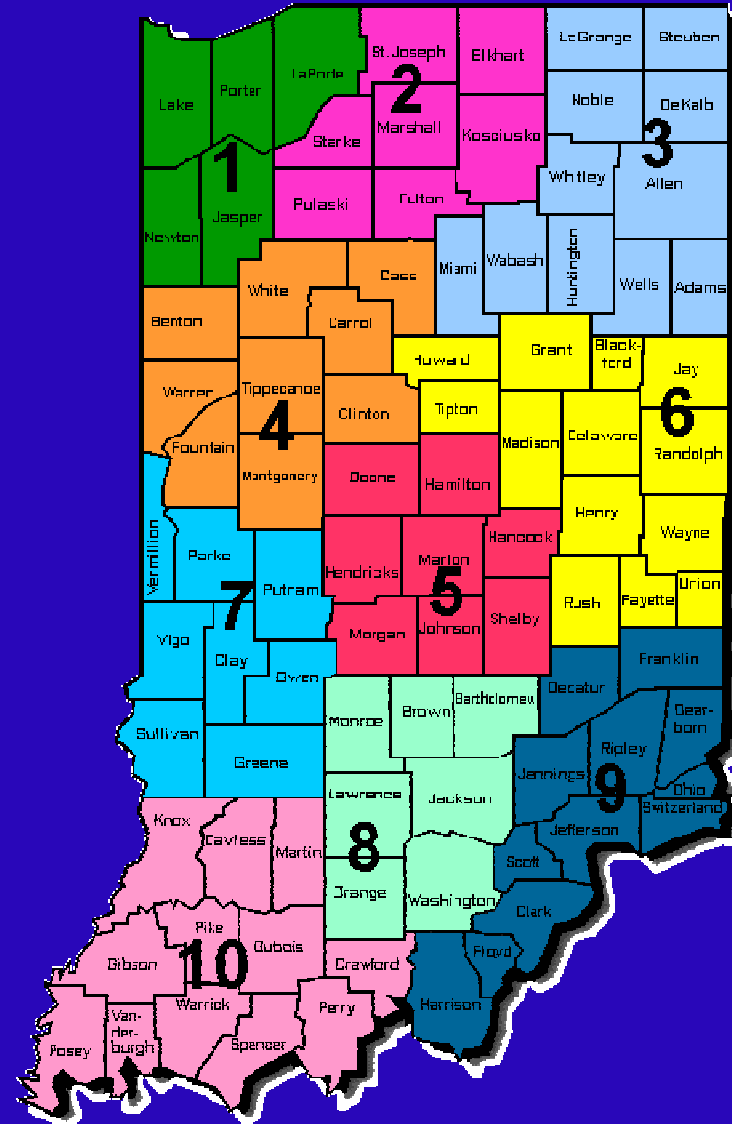
- If injured, seek necessary medical care
- If you can safely, help others who may be trapped or injured
- Stay out of damaged buildings and any building surrounded by flood water
- Avoid entering ANY building (home, business, etc.) until local officials indicate it is safe
- Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities
- Wear sturdy shoes and use extreme caution when entering buildings
- Use battery powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings
- Examine foundations, walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows for cracks or other damage to ensure that the building is not in danger of collapsing
- Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall
- Look for 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**
- **If water is questionable purity, boil, and distill drinking water before using**
- **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 your local health department before making repairs to septic systems**

IDHS District 7

- Clay County
- Green County
- Owen County
- Park County
- Putnam County
- Sullivan County
- Vermillion County
- Vigo County



Additional Resources

- You can get more information about disaster plans and kits by visiting: <http://www.getprepared.in.gov>

For additional information and support, contact your local Emergency Management Agency:

- Clay County EMA (812) 446-2535 x-156
- Greene County EMA (812) 384-4127
- Owen County EMA (812) 829-5035
- Parke County EMA (765) 569-3646
- Putnam County EMA (765) 653-5727
- Sullivan County EMA (812) 268-6257
- Vermillion County EMA (765) 832-5500
- Vigo County EMA (812) 462-3217