



# Weather Safety



## Kansas

Have you ever sat down with your family to discuss and plan what you would do in case of an immediate weather threat? If you haven't, now would be an excellent time to sit down with your family and devise a plan. Finding the time to do this can be difficult, but taking the 15 minutes to develop and practice a plan could save the lives of ones you love. Please remember these tips when planning and carrying out your actions.

## Tornado Safety Tips

### Before the storm:

- Develop a plan of action
- Have frequent drills
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone
- Listen to radio and television for information
- If planning a trip outdoors, listen to forecasts

### In Homes or Small Buildings:

Go to the basement or to an interior room on the lowest floor (e.g. closet or bathroom). Upper floors are unsafe. If there is no time to descend, go to a closet, a small room with strong walls or an inside hallway. Wrap yourself in overcoats or blankets to protect yourself from flying debris.

### In Schools, Hospitals, Factories, or Shopping Centers:

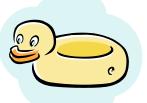
Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide span roofs such as auditoriums and warehouses. Crouch down and cover your head. Don't take shelter in halls that open to the south or the west. Centrally-located stairwells are good shelter.

### If a warning is issued or threatening weather approaches

- Always remember **"DUCK"**
- Stay away from windows
- Get out of automobiles and get into a sturdy structure or ditch.
- Or, buckle your seat belt and get below window level of your vehicle.

## "DUCK"

Down to the lowest level  
Under something sturdy  
Cover your head  
Keep in the shelter until  
the storm has passed



### In High-Rise Buildings:

Go to interior small rooms or halls. Stay away from exterior walls or areas with glass.

### In Mobile Homes:

#### ABANDON THEM IMMEDIATELY!!!

Many deaths occur in mobile homes. If you are in a mobile home when severe weather approaches, leave it immediately and go to a substantial structure or designated tornado shelter. Determine your shelter ahead of time so you don't have to think about it when weather strikes.

### If no Suitable Structure is Nearby:

Lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head. Be alert for flash floods.

# Tornadoes and Overpass Safety

Many people mistakenly think that a highway overpass provides safety from a tornado. In reality, an overpass may be one of the worst places to seek shelter from a tornado. Seeking shelter under an overpass puts you at greater risk of being killed or seriously injured by flying debris from the powerful tornadic winds.

Tornadic winds can make the most benign item a dangerous missile. In addition to the debris that can injure you, the winds under an overpass are channeled and could easily blow you or carry you out from under the overpass and throw you 100s of yards.

As a last resort, lie flat in a ditch, ravine or below grade culvert to protect yourself from flying debris. If no ditch is available, you may remain in your vehicle, put on your seatbelt, lower yourself below window level, and cover your head with your hands or a blanket.

## Lightning Safety

- Watch for developing thunderstorms and be ready to act when thunder is heard.
- Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from an area where it is raining. That's about the distance you can hear thunder.

**If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek safe shelter IMMEDIATELY!**

- Outdoor Activities: Minimize the risk of being struck by moving indoors or to vehicles at the first roar of thunder.
- Inside Activities: Things to avoid
  - Corded phones
  - Computers
  - Other electrical equipment
  - Indoor/Outdoor pools
  - Tubs and showers and other things connected to metal plumbing

**Wait 30 minutes after the last roar of thunder before going outside again.**

- Help a Lightning Victim: Call 911 and get help immediately. You are in no danger when helping a lightning victim. The charge will not affect you.

**When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!**

## Flood Safety

- Floods, especially Flash Floods kill more people each year than any other weather phenomenon.
- As little as 6 inches of fast moving water can sweep you off of your feet.
- As little as 18-24 inches of water is enough to float a car and carry it away.
- If you see a road barrier across a flooded roadway....

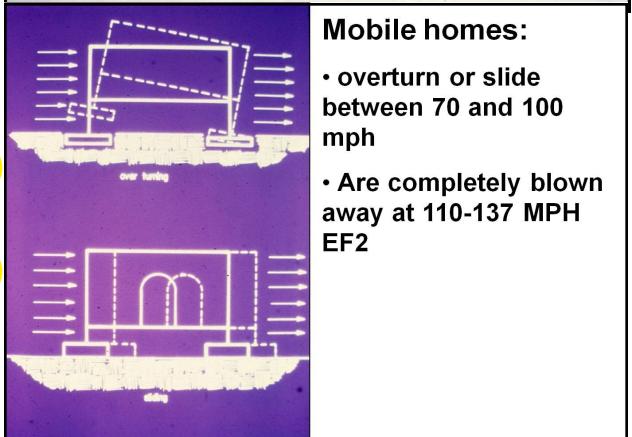
**TURN AROUND. DON'T DROWN!**

- Tune to the NOAA Weather Radio, or your favorite news source for all flood and any other weather related information.
- Leave areas subject to flooding, such as dips, low spots and underpasses.
- Do not attempt to cross flowing streams, you don't know how deep the water could be.
- Never drive through flooded roadways.
- If your vehicle is suddenly caught in rising water, leave it immediately and seek higher ground.
- Report any flooding to your local authorities or to the National Weather Service.

**Turn Around. Don't Drown!**

# Mobile Home Safety

- The average annual death rate in mobile homes due to tornadoes is **20 times** higher than in permanent homes
- Mobile homes were the most common location for **tornado fatalities (44%)** from 1985 to 2005 followed by permanent homes (25.3%) and vehicles (9.9%). This disparity is more striking when considering that mobile homes accounted for a mere 5%–8% of U.S. housing units during this period.
- The National Weather Service (NWS) considers mobile homes unsafe during a tornado.
- Mobile home residents should go to the nearest sturdy building or storm shelter. **Do NOT seek shelter inside your mobile home!**
- In many cases, your car can be a safer sheltering option than staying in your mobile home.**



## Truck stays - M. Home flipped



Picher, OK 2008

## Remember!

- 1) Participate in a tornado drill in your mobile home community. If you don't have one, then organize a tornado drill!
- 2) Understand the definition of a tornado warning\*
- 3) Have an emergency response plan for seeking shelter **away** from your mobile home.

By following these 3 points you can lower the risk to you and your family from the hazards posed by tornadoes in Kansas.

**\*A Tornado Warning means:** there is immediate danger for the warned area. All in a tornado warning are urged to seek shelter immediately, as it can be a life-threatening situation. For our residents who live in mobile homes, this means evacuating the mobile home and seeking shelter in the nearest sturdy building or storm shelter.

## Sirens Are An Outdoor Warning System

Every year the National Weather Service and the emergency management communities get together and provide severe weather information for the public. Each year we emphasize the fact that the outdoor sirens are just that...an Outdoor Warning System. Every year we get a multitude of calls telling us that the sirens can't be heard while in the house.

Severe weather season usually begins in the early spring in Kansas. We all need to be prepared for severe weather at any time of the day or night and at any time of year. The National Weather Service, emergency management, law enforcement, the 9-1-1 center, and the fire department cannot notify every individual of the possibility of severe weather in their town. The local media outlets and All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio are your best sources for information concerning severe weather watches and warnings. Do not wait for the sirens to be your warning system at home. Sirens may not be working if the power is out and oftentimes cannot be heard indoors. Sirens may not be activated for other severe threats such as damaging straight line winds in excess of 60 mph, large hail, and flooding. Monitor NOAA Weather Radio and local media then take the appropriate action for the severe weather threat. If it appears that a severe thunderstorm is approaching your location, do not wait for the outdoor sirens but take immediate action to protect your life and the lives of others in your home.



Hundreds of volunteer storm spotters, amateur radio operators, and first responders provide the first line of defense every time there is severe weather in the local area. They do this because they care about the people in their communities and want to make sure those people are given the best chance at survival. The storm spotters, emergency managers, law enforcement and other volunteers immediately relay severe weather reports to the National Weather Service. The National Weather Service in turn disseminates that information to the media and public through warnings, statements, and local storm reports. Getting the word out to the public in a timely manner may save lives. When severe weather threatens at night while most people sleep, it can be especially dangerous. Oftentimes in the heat of the spring and summer, we cannot hear outdoor sirens over running air conditioners. A NOAA Weather Radio with a back-up battery can make the difference for you and your family.

Take responsibility...listen to the media....take protective action....survive to enjoy the wonderful warm sunny days that also come this time of year.