Minnesota

Severe Weather Awareness Week

April 7 - 11, 2025

Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.

Keeping Minnesota *Ready*

What is Severe Weather Awareness Week?

- Statewide information campaign to inform and refresh knowledge about severe weather threats.

- Aim is to enable citizens to be better prepared and take appropriate action when necessary.







April 7 – 11, 2025

- Each day of the week focuses on a different topic:
  - **Monday** – Weather Alerts and Warnings
  - **Tuesday** – Severe Storms, Lightning and Hail
  - **Wednesday** – Floods and Flash Floods
  - **Thursday** – Statewide Tornado Drill Day
  - **Friday** – Heat Waves

- Information and topics will continue throughout spring and summer on the HSEM website under "Weather Safety"

Severe Weather Hazards Are Real

The top severe weather hazards in Minnesota are:

- Severe storms, hail and lightning
- Floods
- Tornadoes
- Extreme heat

Weather Alerts and Warnings

- **Severe weather warnings** are issued by the National Weather Service.
  - *Know the terms and what they mean.*
- **Warning sirens** are operated **by each county.**
- **Personal weather alerts** – Many cell phone apps and local media outlets and internet sites offer free local personal weather alerting services.
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts** – Sent by authorities to all cell phones in specific area to warn of a dangerous situation or critical information.

Types of Warnings

- **WEATHER <u>WARNING</u> -**
  - A dangerous weather or event is occurring or imminent.
  - Likely significant threat to life or property.
  - Take protective action immediately.
- **WEATHER <u>WATCH</u> -**
  - Weather conditions are favorable for a hazardous weather event.
  - Stay alert to changing conditions.
  - Make alternate plans.
  - Be aware of possible shelter or evacuation routes.
- **WEATHER <u>ADVISORY</u> -**
  - Less hazardous weather conditions or less specific locations.
  - Weather may still pose significant safety risk or travel problems.
  - Situations are possible that could threaten life or property.

Topic for Monday, April 7

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Personal Weather Alerts

Personal and localized electronic weather alerts are available across Minnesota from weather related apps or local media outlets in a variety of formats.

- Email
- Text messages
- Cell phones
- Computers
- Tablets
- Social media

Sample of sources:
(Check local media.)

- Weather.com
- Accuweather.com
- Emergency Email & Wireless Network
- WCCO
- KARE11
- KSTP
- KMSP
- KAAL –TV
- KBJR6/Range 11
- WDAY – Fargo/Moorhead
- KELO – SW Minnesota

Topic for Monday, April 7

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Siren Activation Information

- **Counties and cities in Minnesota own and operate all warning sirens in their jurisdictions.**
- Check with your local public safety officials to learn when and why warning sirens are sounded in your community.
- Sirens normally sound for about two to three minutes and then go silent.
- **There is no such thing as an "all-clear" siren.**

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Severe Thunderstorms, Lightning and Hail

- Thunderstorms affect relatively small areas.
- A typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts for about 30 minutes.
- Severe thunderstorms can produce large hail or have winds of at least 58 mph.
- Some wind gusts can exceed 100 mph and produce tornado-like damage.

Facts About Thunderstorms

- Warm, humid conditions are favorable for storm development.
- Storms may occur singly, in clusters or in lines.
- Storms typically produce heavy rain for a brief period.
- Ten percent of storms are severe – typically including high winds and large hail.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Facts About Hail

- Hail is larger than sleet and forms in thunderstorms.
- Updrafts are strong rising currents of air within a storm that carry water droplets to a height where they freeze and become hail.
- Hail can range from pea-sized (most common) to as large as baseball-sized or more.
- Large hail stones fall faster than 100 mph and can injure or even kill people.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Facts About Lightning

- All thunderstorms produce lightning.
- A bolt of lightning can be over five miles in length.
- Lightning can strike up to 15 miles away from the center of a storm.
- Your chance of being struck by lightning once in your lifetime: 1 in 12,000. (*NWS Data)*
- “Heat” lightning doesn’t exist - it is flashes from a far-away storm that can’t be heard.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Know the Warning Terms

- **Severe Thunderstorm Watch**

Weather conditions are favorable for producing severe thunderstorms. Remain alert and stay informed.

- **Severe Thunderstorm Warning**

Severe weather has been reported or indicated on weather radar. Seek shelter immediately.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Before Severe Storms and Lightning

- Secure outdoor objects.
- Close/shutter windows and secure outside doors.
- Consider postponing outdoor activities.
- Know where the nearest shelters are.
- Know where to get weather reports.
- Have a weather radio with battery backup.
- Check your emergency kit – is it ready?

During Thunderstorms with Lightning

- The safest place to be during a thunderstorm is any normal building (with water pipes or electricity).

- Most hard top cars are safe from lightning. (It is the metal roof and metal sides that protect you, NOT the rubber tires.)
  - Convertibles, motorcycles, bicycles, fiberglass vehicles offer no protection from lightning.
  - Avoid contact with interior metal during the storm.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

During Thunderstorms with Lightning

- No place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area.
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter: a building or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with windows up.
- Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes *after* you hear the last sound of thunder.

During Thunderstorms with Lightning

If you are outside and cannot find shelter:

- Avoid tall trees, hilltops, open fields, beaches, cliffs.
- Avoid ungrounded sheds or flimsy structures – especially in open areas.
- If you are in a boat – get to shore and off the water as soon as possible and find shelter.
- Get to the lowest area available that is not in flood area.

Topic for Tuesday, April 8

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Facts about Lightning

- All thunderstorms produce lightning. If you can hear thunder, you are in range of lightning.
- Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's a tall, pointed, isolated object.
- Lightning can strike up to 15 miles from the center of the thunderstorm, far from the rain or storm cloud.

Floods and Flash Floods

- One of the most common natural hazards in Minnesota.
- Seasonal snowmelt floods tend to develop slowly.
- Flash floods develop quickly during heavy rains leaving little time for preparation.
- Risks are greater in low-lying areas, near existing water, behind a levee or downstream from a dam.

Know the Flood Warning Terms

- **Flood or flash flood watch**

Conditions exist for possible flooding.

- **Flood warning**

Flooding is occurring or will occur soon.

- **Flash flood warning**

A flash flood is occurring or will occur soon.

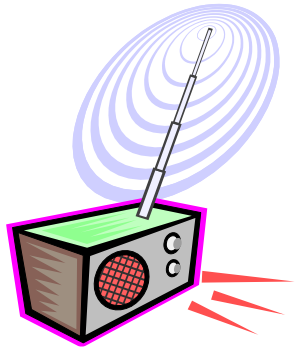
  - Seek safety or higher ground immediately and avoid flooded roadways.

Before a Flood

- Buy flood insurance for your home at least 30 days ahead of flood season.
- Elevate basement furnaces, water heaters, and electric panels.
- Install check valves in sewer traps.
- Construct barriers or dikes if possible.
- Seal basement walls.
- Prepare for evacuation if necessary.
  - *Have a plan and inform family and neighbors.*
  - *Have a "go kit" ready with valuables and important papers and enough supplies to last several days.*

During a Flood - Plan

- Listen to radio or TV for information.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels and canyons.
- Be aware of road and bridge closures; find alternate routes.
- Move immediately to high ground if flood waters are near.
- Be prepared to evacuate on short notice.



During a Flood - Prepare

- If you have to evacuate, and time permits:
  - *Secure your home.*
  - *Bring in outdoor furniture.*
  - *Move essential items to an upper floor.*
  - *Turn off utilities.*
- Plan an evacuation route and inform family and neighbors of destination.

During a Flood – Don't Drive

- Do not walk or drive through moving water.
- Do not drive on flooded roads.
- Be aware of downed power lines.



After a Flood

- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Use caution when entering buildings.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems.
- Clean and disinfect damaged property.
- Have alternate sewage/toilet capacity.



Topic for Thursday, April 10

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Tornado Drill Day – April 10

Tornado Safety Information

- Nature's most intensely violent storm.
- Minnesota averages 40 tornadoes per year – with 41 tornadoes in 2024.
- Tornadoes may strike quickly with little warning.
- Tornadoes can occur any time of day or night but often occur in the late afternoon or evening.

Know the Tornado Warning Terms

- **Tornado watch**

Weather conditions are favorable for tornadoes; remain alert for approaching storms.

- **Tornado warning**

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar; take shelter immediately.

Before a Tornado

During a Tornado Watch

- Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Know your surroundings and location.
- Have a plan for severe weather.
- Have a programmed NOAA Weather Radio operating.
- Listen to radio or TV or check the internet frequently for up to date information.

Topic for Thursday, April 10

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

During a Tornado Warning

- Find shelter immediately.
- Seek a small interior room.
- Get away from glass windows.
- Leave mobile homes or trailers.
- If outside, lie flat in a ditch or depression and cover your head.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge.
- If in a vehicle – stop and find shelter in a strong building nearby immediately.
- Watch for flying debris.



Tornado Drill Day

- **Afternoon Tornado Drill: Thursday, April 10 - 1:45 p.m.**
  - NWS will send simulated warnings to NOAA Weather Radios.
  - All counties across Minnesota sound outdoor warning sirens.
  - Schools, businesses, and organizations are encouraged to conduct a tornado drill at this time to practice their own tornado sheltering plans.

- **Evening Tornado Drill: Thursday, April 10 - 6:45 p.m.**
  - Severe weather and tornadoes occur most often between 3 - 8 p.m.
  - Second drill allows second-shift workers and families at home to practice their sheltering plans.
  - County participation is voluntary.

Topic for Thursday, April 10

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Tornado Drill Day – How to Participate

Prepare Your Home

- Create or update emergency plans with your entire family.
- Practice your family plan during the evening tornado drill at 6:45 p.m.
- Check emergency plans at places your family spends time, such as schools, workplaces, churches, markets, or sports facilities.
- Share the plans for these areas with your entire family.

Prepare Your Neighborhood

- Involve your neighbors. Find out who has special needs and might need help in an emergency.
- Plan with your neighborhood. Ask your Home Owners Association, your Tenants Group or Neighborhood Civic Association to make emergency preparedness an agenda item during your next meeting.
- Help neighbors get informed. Host a neighborhood preparedness meeting. Invite your local emergency manager or responders to help lead the discussions.

Topic for Thursday, April 10

Severe Weather Awareness Week 2025

Tornado Drill Day – How to Participate

Prepare Your Community

- Include preparedness activities at community events.
- Host a Local Preparedness Fair.
- Create or participate in a Citizen Corps - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Prepare Your Workplace

- Designate critical function or emergency personnel.
- Organize an emergency preparedness procedures review.
- Host a disaster preparedness brown bag lunch for employees.
- Get a NOAA Weather Radio.
- Distribute a facility emergency plan.
- Conduct business continuity training.
- Schedule an emergency exercise or drill.

Extreme Heat

- Heat-related fatalities outpace deaths in several other weather categories.
- Based on a national average excessive heat claims 219 lives each year.
- By contrast, floods kill 88, tornadoes 57, lightning 52 and hurricanes 15.

Heat Problems

- **Heat cramps** are muscular pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or abdomen caused by exposure to high heat and humidity, and loss of fluids and electrolytes.
  - Find a cool location to rest and take fluids (water or sports drinks).
- **Heat exhaustion** typically involves the loss of body fluids through heavy sweating during strenuous exercise or physical labor in high heat and humidity.
  - Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea; dizziness; weakness; and exhaustion.
- **Heat stroke** (also known as sunstroke) is a life-threatening condition in which a person's temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself.
  - Signs of heat stroke include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting; and high body temperature.
  - Heat stroke is life-threatening. **Call 911** immediately!

Topic for Friday, April 11

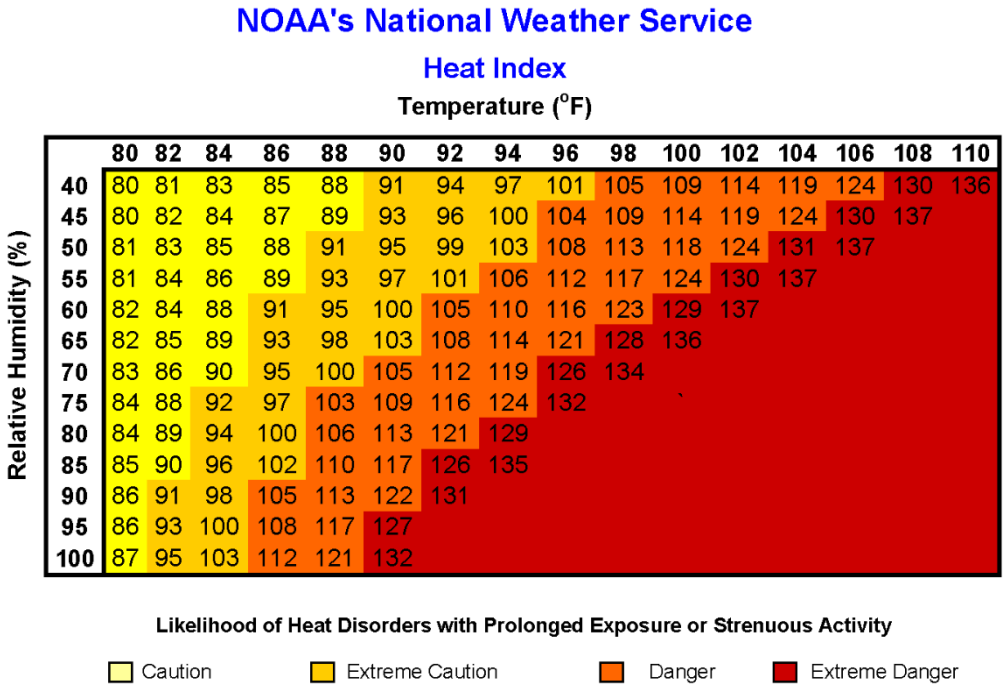
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During a Heat Wave

- Drink more fluids – avoid alcohol and high-sugared drinks.
- Stay in an air-conditioned place during the hottest parts of the day.
- If air conditioning is not available, be in a location with adequate shade, air-flow and ventilation.
- Make use of public venues or cooling centers if necessary.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- NEVER leave any person or animal in a closed, parked vehicle.

Heat Index

- The Heat Index is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to the air temperature.
- Heat Index values are based on shady conditions with a light wind; exposure to full sunshine can increase values by up to 15 degrees.



Know the Heat Warning Terms

- **Excessive Heat Warning**

Issued within 12 hours of the heat index reaching one of two levels. A warning will be issued if :

  - The heat index is greater than 105°F for any period of time.

- **Excessive Heat Watch**

Issued when the heat index is expected to be greater than 105°F and nighttime low temperature will be at least 75°F or higher for two consecutive days.

How to prepare for any emergency

Four simple preparedness steps:

- Have a Family Emergency Plan
- Make a Emergency Supply Kit
- Stay Informed
- Get Involved