



Important Dates and Reminders

REMINDERS

- Use buddy system when working in labs
- Do not leave labs unlocked
- Be aware of your surroundings

Safety Newsletter

This month's topic covers severe weather.

Severe Weather

Here in central Illinois we experience severe weather during the Spring and Summer. Severe weather can mean strong thunderstorms, hail, high speed winds, and possibly tornadoes.

Severe Thunderstorm Safety:

Severe thunderstorms are officially defined as storms that are capable of producing hail that is an inch or larger or wind gusts over 58 mph. Hail this size can damage property such as plants, roofs and vehicles. Wind this strong is able to break off large branches, knock over trees or cause structural damage to trees. Some severe thunderstorms can produce hail larger than softballs or winds over 100 mph, so please pay attention to the weather so you know when severe storms are possible. Thunderstorms also produce tornadoes and dangerous lightning; heavy rain can cause flash flooding.

During severe weather you should act quickly to stay safe and minimize impacts.

- **Stay Weather Ready:** Continue to listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay updated about severe thunderstorm watches and warnings.
- **At Your House:** Go to your secure location if you hear a severe thunderstorm warning. Damaging wind or large hail may be approaching. Take your pets with you if time allows.
- **At Your Workplace or School:** Stay away from windows if you are in a severe thunderstorm warning and damaging wind or large hail is approaching. Do not go to large open rooms such as cafeterias, gymnasiums or auditoriums.
- **Outside:** Go inside a sturdy building immediately if severe thunderstorms are approaching. Sheds and storage facilities are not safe. Taking shelter under a tree can be deadly. The tree may fall on you. Standing under a tree also put you at a greater risk of getting struck by lightning.
- **In a Vehicle:** Being in a vehicle during severe thunderstorms is safer than being outside; however, drive to closest secure shelter if there is sufficient time.

Difference between a thunderstorm WATCH and a WARNING:

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Prepare. Severe thunderstorms are possible in and near the watch area. Stay informed and be ready to act if a severe thunderstorm warning is issued. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or even states.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Take Action. Severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. Take shelter in a substantial building. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds. Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area (around the size of a city or small county) that may be impacted by a large hail or damaging wind identified by an NWS forecaster on radar or by a trained spotter/law enforcement who is watching the storm.

Useful Contacts

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Tornado Safety:

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornadoes are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees, and hurling objects through the air like deadly missiles. Tornadoes can occur at any time of day or night and at any time of the year. Although tornadoes are most common in the Central Plains and the southeastern United States, they have been reported in all 50 states.

- **Stay Weather-Ready:** Continue to listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay updated about tornado watches and warnings.
- **At Your House:** If you are in a tornado warning, go to your basement, safe room, or an interior room away from windows. Don't forget pets if time allows.
- **At Your Workplace or School:** Follow your tornado drill and proceed to your tornado shelter location quickly and calmly. Stay away from windows and do not go to large open rooms such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, or auditoriums.
- **Outside:** Seek shelter inside a sturdy building immediately if a tornado is approaching. Sheds and storage facilities are not safe.
- **In a vehicle:** Being in a vehicle during a tornado is not safe. The best course of action is to drive to the closest shelter. If you are unable to make it to a safe shelter, either get down in your car and cover your head, or abandon your car and seek shelter in a low lying area such as a ditch or ravine.

Difference between Tornado Watch and Tornado Warning

Tornado Watch: Prepare. Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives! Watches are issued by the Storm Prediction Center for counties where tornadoes may occur. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or even states.

Tornado Warning: Take Action. A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows. If in a mobile home, a vehicle, or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris. Warnings are issued by your local forecast office. Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area (around the size of a city or small county) that may be impacted by a tornado identified by a forecaster on radar or by a trained spotter/law enforcement who is watching the storm.

The U of I campus is equipped with an alarm system to warn us tornadoes if there is a tornado. The tornado sirens are tested on the first Tuesday of each month.

The information in this newsletter was found at <https://www.weather.gov/>.