

BEFORE THE STORM PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST



- ✓ **KNOW YOUR SAFE PLACE**
CRITERIA FOR YOUR SAFE PLACE:
 1. MOST INTERIOR ROOM OF YOUR HOME
 2. LOWEST LEVEL
 3. NO WINDOWS OR DOORS TO THE OUTSIDE

IF YOU LIVE IN A MOBILE HOME:

 - YOUR LOCAL STORM SHELTER IS THE SAFEST PLACE TO BE DURING SEVERE WEATHER
 - KNOW WHERE THE SHELTER IS LOCATED AND THE FASTEST WAY TO GET THERE
- ✓ **HAVE AN EMERGENCY KIT READY**
PUT ALL THE EMERGENCY KIT SUPPLIES LISTED BELOW IN A BAG OR BACKPACK AND KEEP IT IN YOUR SAFE PLACE.
- ✓ **HAVE MULTIPLE WAYS TO RECEIVE WARNINGS**
 - WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS ON YOUR PHONE
 - NOAA WEATHER RADIO
 - LOCAL TV NEWS STATIONS
 - INTERNET
 - MOBILE PHONE WEATHER APPS
 - THE FREE 'TORNADO' APP BY THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IS A GREAT RESOURCE.
- ✓ **PRACTICE YOUR SEVERE WEATHER PLAN WITH YOUR FAMILY**

WHAT TO DO DURING THE STORM

- LISTEN TO YOUR LOCAL NEWS STATION OR A NOAA WEATHER RADIO AND/OR FOLLOW YOUR NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE FOR THE LATEST WEATHER UPDATES AND/OR WARNINGS.
- IF OUTSIDE DURING A STORM AND YOU HEAR THUNDER, GO INSIDE AND STAND AWAY FROM WINDOWS.

IF A TORNADO WARNING IS ISSUED:

- GO TO YOUR SAFE PLACE IMMEDIATELY.



- CONTINUE TO LISTEN TO WEATHER UPDATES ON YOUR PHONE AND/OR A NOAA WEATHER RADIO.
- DO NOT LEAVE YOUR SAFE PLACE UNTIL THE TORNADO WARNING HAS EXPIRED FOR YOUR AREA.

WHO TO CALL AFTER THE STORM

- IF IT IS A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION, CALL 911
- CALL THE LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR'S OFFICE TO IDENTIFY ANY IMMEDIATE SHELTER NEEDS
 - PHONE NUMBERS FOR EACH COUNTY EMA DIRECTOR CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.MSEMA.ORG
- CALL YOUR INSURANCE AGENT TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FILING A CLAIM

THOSE WITH DISABILITIES CAN CALL:

- LIFE OF MS: (601) 969-4009 OR 1-800-748-9398 (V/TDD)
- MISSISSIPPI COALITION OF CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES: 601-969-0601



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION AND WEBSITES

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
1-866-519-MEMA (6362)
WWW.MSEMA.ORG

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
JACKSON, MS**
601-936-2189
WWW.WEATHER.GOV/JAN

MOBILE, AL
251-633-6443
WWW.WEATHER.GOV/MOB

NEW ORLEANS, LA
504-522-7330
WWW.WEATHER.GOV/LIX

MEMPHIS, TN
901-544-0399
WWW.WEATHER.GOV/MEG

MDOT TRAFFIC HOTLINE
1-866-521-6368

STORM PREDICTION CENTER
WWW.SPC.NOAA.GOV

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
WWW.FEMA.GOV

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WWW.MDOTTRAFFIC.COM

MISSISSIPPI BUSINESS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
MISSISSIPPI BUSINESSES THAT ARE INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING SUPPLIES TO HELP MEMA RESPOND TO SEVERE WEATHER ARE ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER WITH OUR BUSINESS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ONLINE AT WWW.MSBEOC.ORG

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

- FOOD & WATER
- FLASHLIGHT
- PHONE CHARGER
- PERSONAL DOCUMENTS
- PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS
- MULTI-PURPOSE TOOL
- PORTABLE RADIO AND NOAA WEATHER RADIO
- EXTRA SHOES
- CAR KEYS
- EXTRA BATTERIES
- CASH
- FIRST AID KIT



DEPENDING ON YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS, YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO INCLUDE:
EXTRA MEDICAL ITEMS, BABY SUPPLIES AND PET SUPPLIES.

ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT ITEMS FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES:

- A WEEK-LONG SUPPLY OF MEDICATIONS ALONG WITH A LIST OF DOSAGE
- DESCRIPTIONS OF REQUIRED ACCOMMODATIONS, MEDICAL CONDITIONS, AND/OR FUNCTIONAL NEEDS
- LIST OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES NEEDED
- EXTRA EYEGLASSES AND/OR HEARING AID BATTERIES
- EXTRA WHEELCHAIR BATTERIES AND/OR OXYGEN
- LIST OF MEDICAL DEVICES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPERATING EQUIPMENT
- COPIES OF MEDICAL INSURANCE AND MEDICARE CARDS
- CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DOCTORS AND RELATIVES

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE STORM

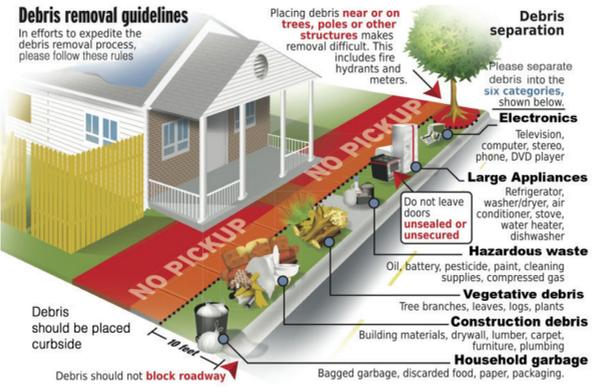
- HELP INJURED OR TRAPPED PERSONS AND GIVE FIRST AID WHEN APPROPRIATE.
 - DON'T TRY TO MOVE THE SERIOUSLY INJURED UNLESS THEY ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF FURTHER INJURY. CALL FOR HELP.
- USE A RADIO TO GET THE LATEST EMERGENCY INFORMATION.
- STAY OUT OF DAMAGED BUILDINGS AND WAIT TO RE-ENTER YOUR HOME UNTIL AUTHORITIES SAY IT IS SAFE.
- USE THE PHONE FOR EMERGENCY CALLS ONLY.
- CLEAN UP SPILLED MEDICINES, BLEACH, GASOLINE OR OTHER FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS IMMEDIATELY. LEAVE THE BUILDING IF YOU SMELL GAS OR CHEMICAL FUMES.
- IF YOU COME ACROSS A FALLEN POWER LINE, STAY BACK AT LEAST 500 FEET AND NEVER TOUCH THE LINE.
- TAKE PICTURES OF THE DAMAGE--BOTH TO THE HOUSE AND ITS CONTENTS-- FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO HELP YOUR NEIGHBORS WHO MAY REQUIRE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE -- INFANTS, THE ELDERLY, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.



DEBRIS SORTING

After the storm passes, the recovery phase begins, which often includes major cleanup. It's important to know the proper way to sort damaged household items and debris to help in disposal efforts. The debris sorting process is also crucial when trying to obtain a disaster declaration for federal funding.



DisasterAssistance.gov
ACCESS TO DISASTER HELP AND RESOURCES

DisasterAssistance.gov MSEMA.org
1-800-621-3362 or hearing impaired 1-800-462-7485
Smartphone mfema.gov



FEMA



CRISIS TRACK DAMAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL

One of the critical first steps taken by your local county officials after a hurricane (or any disaster) is to complete a comprehensive damage assessment of all structures within a county.

The data gathered during this comprehensive damage assessment not only is used by County Emergency Management to assist them in determining the scope and extent of the Hurricane impacts; but is also used by MEMA to help determine whether or not to request Federal Disaster Assistance and if a request is made, is used to support the Governor's request for FEMA assistance.

MEMA is working with Crisis Track to provide every county in Mississippi with the Crisis Track Disaster Management Application. The Crisis Track application will be used to conduct post hurricane damage assessments; as well as assist with the planning, conduct, and documentation of other critical disaster related response and recovery operations.

The Crisis Track application allows County Emergency Managers and other county staff to quickly conduct, report, and document the extent and level of damage to every structure within an affected county. All information collected at the county level is automatically shared in real-time with MEMA's Emergency Operations Center in Jackson.

This tool will allow MEMA to be better prepared to respond to affected counties with state resources when needed and ultimately, it will speed up the delivery of Federal Disaster Assistance to the state and our residents when it is most needed. One of the key features provided by the MEMA contract with Crisis Track is the Resident Self-Reporting Page, which is used by residents and businesses to report damage to their property. **THIS IS NOT AN EMERGENCY REPORTING SYSTEM, PLEASE USE 911 TO REPORT SERIOUS INJURIES OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.**

Each County in Mississippi has a dedicated webpage that residents can utilize to report Hurricane (or other disaster) damage to their property. We encourage Mississippians to take advantage of this tool during disasters. For more information and to find the self-reporting links by county, visit our website: www.msema.org



PREPAREDNESS GUIDE



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR TATE REEVES

Mississippians are all too familiar with weathering storms that come our way. With the recent devastation of historic tornadoes and flooding fresh in our minds, it's important now more than ever that we learn and grow from these tragic events. Taking those lessons with us, it is our responsibility as a state to plan for the worst, pray for the best, and expect somewhere in between. As our first responders and law enforcement work together to ensure severe weather readiness, the most important factor in surviving a disaster is personal preparedness. Please take advantage of the vital information in this guide and take the necessary steps to protect your family and your property. There is no substitute for having a plan and being prepared.



Tate Reeves

Governor Tate Reeves
State of Mississippi

SEVERE WEATHER GUIDE OVERVIEW

Located in the heart of 'Dixie Alley', Mississippi experiences active weather most months of the year. Our primary severe weather season stretches from March until May each year along with a secondary season that begins in November and runs through December. Mississippians are vulnerable to all hazards associated with severe weather, which includes tornadoes, hail, damaging wind, flash flooding and lightning.

For this reason, Governor Tate Reeves, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency's Executive Director Gregory Michel and the National Weather Service urge Mississippians to prepare for severe storms by creating a severe weather safety plan for you and your family.

Determining a 'safe place' to shelter during a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning is a key component of any severe weather safety plan. Other aspects include developing an emergency supply kit and creating a communication plan for when you and your family are directly impacted by a severe storm.

This guide will not only help you prepare for severe weather season and teach you about the science behind the storm, but it will also explain the best ways to respond when the threat of severe storms is imminent.

MESSAGE FROM THE MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



MEMA's first priority is, and always will be, the safety of Mississippians. Though we have been fortunate enough for the last two years to avoid a devastating hurricane season, Mississippi has endured some of the longest duration flood events and a record number of tornadoes during 2019. For that reason, we always stress preparedness!

Severe weather is not a seasonal event in Mississippi. We at MEMA urge citizens to remain as prepared as possible. Through this severe weather guide, we hope to inform you of the different types of severe weather you can encounter throughout the year. Flooding and tornadoes have ravaged our state the past couple of years; because of that we want Mississippians to be fully prepared for what Mother Nature throws at them.

Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, MEMA responded to 115 confirmed tornadoes across the state as well as experiencing the longest federally declared weather event, Backwater Flood, in the history of FEMA.

I hope this guide will help you prepare for those dark and stormy days. It is important to know where you will go and what supplies you will need to take with you. Prepare for days, perhaps weeks, without electricity after a storm passes. Be sure to discuss your evacuation plan with loved ones and have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts and warnings. We urge homeowners and renters to carry insurance, including flood insurance, on your homes and belongings. MEMA will be there to assist you should a disaster affect you, but carrying the proper insurance is the only way to guarantee a full recovery.

We live in a beautiful state and I am proud to serve Mississippians in this role as Director of MEMA. Continue to always be prepared and stay alert to your local and state officials when severe weather threatens our state.

Greg Michel

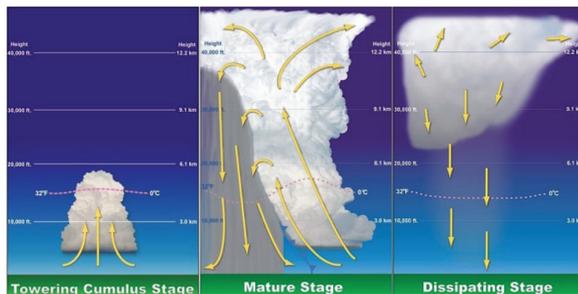
MEMA Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Mississippi is no stranger to severe weather, especially during the spring months. The types of weather that Mississippians can experience includes flooding, hail, strong damaging wind gusts and of course tornadoes. The peak season for severe weather occurs in April and April of 2020 unfortunately did not disappoint. The Easter Tornado Outbreak of 2020 was historically significant as it produced the widest tornado on Mississippi record of 2.25 miles, which impacted five Mississippi counties. It is events such as this that brings about the importance of ensuring you have multiple ways of receiving severe weather information (NOAA Weather Radio, Television, mobile phone, etc.) and have a safety plan in place in the case shelter due to weather is required. Being prepared is key during the severe weather season in Mississippi, and we at the National Weather Service in Jackson, Mississippi will always be ready to fulfill our mission to protect life and property.



STAYING INFORMED AND BEING PREPARED IS KEY TO STAYING SAFE.

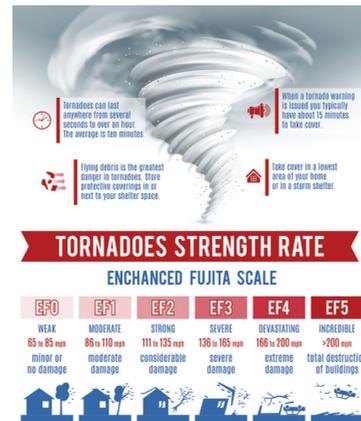


TORNADOES

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground that can have wind speeds over 200 mph. Tornadoes form within a thunderstorm when there is strong vertical wind shear (where winds change in speed and direction with height), which creates a rotating cylinder of air. Ultimately, that rotating column of air narrows becoming stretched and begins to spin faster and faster until it reaches the ground.

Tornadoes can destroy buildings, flip cars, and create deadly flying debris. Although most tornadoes are usually brief, lasting a few minutes, some can last for more than an hour and travel several miles causing substantial damage. Tornadoes are particularly dangerous in Mississippi, because they are often very difficult to spot due to the rolling terrain and the fact that they are usually rain-wrapped.

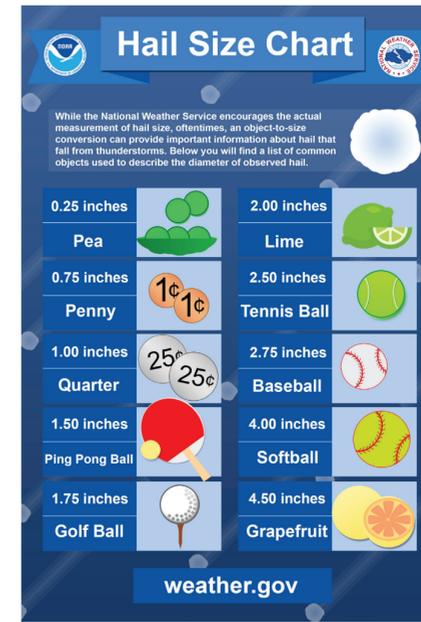
After the storm passes, members from the National Weather Service survey the impacted areas and assess the damage to determine the strength of the tornado based on the Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale. This scale is broken down into six categories that describe how tornado damage relates to wind speed. An EF-0 is the weakest category on the scale with wind gusts up to 85 mph and an EF-5 is the strongest with wind gusts over 200 mph.



HAIL

Hail is a type of precipitation consisting of solid ice that forms inside severe thunderstorms. Hailstones form when raindrops are carried upward by the thunderstorm's updraft into extremely cold areas of the atmosphere and freeze. The hailstone will continue to grow as liquid water droplets freeze onto its surface. However, when the hail is heavy enough to overcome the storm's updraft it will fall to the ground sometimes at speeds exceeding 100 mph.

Depending on the strength of the thunderstorm, hailstones can vary in size from the size of a pea to as large as a grapefruit. Hail is a dangerous hazard of severe thunderstorms, because not only can it cause damage to homes and cars, but it can also pose a threat to people.



STAYING AHEAD OF THE STORMS

Severe weather rarely happens without any warning, which is why it's important to stay up to date with the latest weather forecast from your local National Weather Service office, especially during severe weather season.

The Storm Prediction Center located in Norman, Oklahoma monitors the threat for severe weather across the country. They work with the local National Weather Service offices to provide severe weather outlooks, so you can prepare for incoming severe weather days in advance.

Ahead of severe weather, local television meteorologists and your National Weather Service office will often share the Storm Prediction Center's convective outlook graphics. This graphic displays up to six different colors representing the risk level of a possible severe weather event. The scale ranges from a level 1 'marginal risk' representing the possibility of isolated severe storms up to a level 5 'high risk' where widespread severe storms are expected.

THUNDERSTORMS (no label)	1 - MARGINAL (MRGL)	2 - SLIGHT (SLGT)	3 - ENHANCED (ENH)	4 - MODERATE (MDT)	5 - HIGH (HIGH)
No severe* thunderstorms expected	Isolated severe thunderstorms possible	Scattered severe storms possible	Numerous severe storms possible	Widespread severe storms likely	Widespread severe storms expected
Lightning/flooding threats exist with all thunderstorms	Limited in duration and/or coverage and/or intensity	Short-lived and/or not widespread, isolated intense storms possible	More persistent and/or widespread, a few intense	Long-lived, widespread and intense	Long-lived, very widespread and particularly intense
Winds to 40 mph Small hail	Winds 40-60 mph Hail up to 1" Low tornado risk	One or two tornadoes Reports of strong winds/wind damage Hail - 1", isolated 2"	A few tornadoes Several reports of wind damage Damaging hail, 1 - 2"	Strong tornadoes Widespread wind damage Destructive hail, 2" +	Tornado outbreak Derecho

NWS defines a severe thunderstorm as measured wind gusts to at least 58 mph, and/or hail to at least one inch in diameter, and/or a tornado. All thunderstorm categories imply lightning and the potential for flooding. Categories are also tied to the probability of a severe weather event within 25 miles of your location.

National Weather Service
www.spc.noaa.gov

DAMAGING WIND

Damaging winds that are not associated with rotation are often called 'straight-line' winds and at times can exceed 100 mph. Most of the time, winds associated with severe thunderstorms that produce substantial damage are a result of an outflow created by the storm's downdraft.

On average, damage from severe thunderstorm winds account for half of all severe reports and can be just as destructive as a tornado. A severe thunderstorm warning is categorized by wind gusts greater than 58 mph. So, when a warning is issued, it's important to seek shelter immediately in a sturdy building away from doors and windows.



LIGHTNING

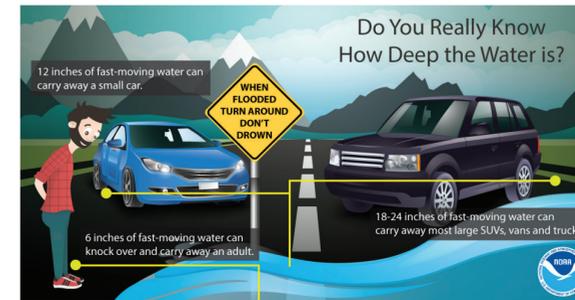
Lightning is a giant spark of electricity within thunderstorm clouds or between the clouds and the ground, which occurs in all thunderstorms. The United States experiences about 25 million lightning strikes a year and on average, each lightning strike contains enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for three months!

Unfortunately, there is no safe place outside during a thunderstorm. If you hear thunder, then you are likely within striking distance. Just remember, 'when thunder roars, go indoors'. When you're safely inside and the storm has passed, wait 30 minutes after you hear the last clap of thunder before you go back outside.

FLASH FLOODING

Flash flooding is caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time. It can occur in a matter of minutes or a few hours. Here in Mississippi, we experience this threat quite often during severe weather season when strong thunderstorms move through and drop a lot of rain very quickly.

Flash flooding is one of the most dangerous hazards, so it's important to never underestimate the power of water!



FLOOD FACTS:

- 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock you off your feet
- 12 inches of fast-moving water can carry away a small car
- More than 50% of all flood fatalities are vehicle related

STAY SAFE DURING FLASH FLOODING:

- 'Turn Around Don't Drown'
 - If you can't see the road, DO NOT drive through the water
- Never drive around barricades into flood waters
- Move to higher ground if flooding is imminent in your area
- Do not allow children to play in or around flood waters

WATCH VS. WARNING

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH

- Definition = Severe storms (capable of producing large hail or damaging wind) are possible within the watch area.
 - Be prepared!
- Usually issued a couple hours before the severe weather event.
- A watch area covers numerous counties or even states.
- The NWS issues Severe Thunderstorm Watches in light pink.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING

- Definition = A severe storm producing damaging wind or large hail has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar.
 - Take action and seek shelter!
- Issued when the threat of a severe storm is imminent.
- A warning area covers a much smaller area, usually only portions of a county or a few towns/cities and is shaped like a polygon.
- The NWS issues Severe Thunderstorm Warnings in yellow.

TORNADO WATCH

- Definition = Tornadoes are possible in and around the watch area.
 - Be prepared!
- Usually issued a couple hours before the severe weather event.
- A watch area covers numerous counties or even states.
- The NWS issues Tornado Watches in yellow.

TORNADO WARNING

- Definition = A tornado has been sighted on the ground by spotters or indicated by radar.
 - Take action and seek shelter!
- Issued when there is imminent danger to life and property due to a tornado.
- A warning area covers a much smaller area, usually only portions of a county or a few towns/cities and is shaped like a polygon.
- The NWS issues Tornado Warnings in red.