



SOCOM SAFETY GRAM

DESTRUCTIVE WEATHER

JUNE 2012



National Lightning Safety Awareness Week 24-30 June 2012. Debunking some myths about Lightning. Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's a tall pointy isolated object. The Empire State Building use to be used as a lightning laboratory, since it is hit nearly 25 times a year. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the **safest place** to be during lightning activity is a **large enclosed building**, not a picnic shelter or shed. The second safest location is an enclosed metal vehicle, car, van, etc. If caught outdoors and no shelter is nearby, stay away from tall trees. If there is no shelter, crouch in the open, keeping twice as far away from a tree as it is tall." Lightning safety tips for inside the home include:

- ✓ **Avoid** contact with **corded phones**
- ✓ Avoid contact with **plumbing**. Do not wash your hands; do not take a shower; do not wash dishes; and do not do laundry
- ✓ Stay away from **windows and doors**, and stay off **porches**
- ✓ Avoid contact with **electrical** equipment or cords. If you plan to unplug any electronic equipment, do so well before the storm arrives
- ✓ **Do not lie on concrete floors**, and do not **lean against concrete walls**

For more information on lightning safety, visit: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Tornado season can bring complete devastation to individual homes or entire communities. In 2011 there were 1,704 confirmed Tornadoes in the United States and as a result 553 people lost their lives. The early spring and summer are prime times for tornadoes. Unfortunately, the ability to protect one's belongings is beyond what any person can do. Many changes take place in the atmosphere when a tornado may occur. It is important to learn the natural signs of a tornado in case weather forecasting is not available. Easy ways to tell if a tornado might be a threat are listed below.

- ✓ Strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base
- ✓ Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base—this may indicate a tornado funnel that is still inside the cloud
- ✓ Hail or heavy rain followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift
- ✓ Many tornadoes are wrapped in heavy precipitation and can't be seen
- ✓ Loud, continuous roar or rumble, which doesn't fade in a few seconds like thunder
- ✓ A tornado also may sound like a waterfall, trains, and jets
- ✓ Night- Small, bright, blue-green to white flashes at ground level near a thunderstorm, opposed to lightning flashes or strikes. This means power lines are being snapped by very strong wind, which may be a tornado
- ✓ The sky may be a greenish black color
- ✓ Clouds moving by very rapidly, which indicates strong winds
- ✓ Debris falling from the sky
- ✓ A funnel cloud that hasn't touched the ground yet is a huge sign of a tornado



Tornado watch: conditions for a tornado are favorable - be prepared in case there is a tornado warning. **Tornado warning:** a tornado has been spotted - take shelter immediately. To find out more about tornadoes and additional safety tips visit <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/index.html>



In the United States, where flood mitigation and prediction is advanced, floods do about \$6 billion worth of damage and kill about 140 people every year. Floods are a relatively common and extremely destructive severe weather phenomenon in the United States. Being prepared for a flood and knowing what to do when floods occur can protect your property and reduce the likelihood of bodily harm to you and others around you. Ways to protect your self in the event of a flood are list below.

- ✓ Be aware of the closest high-elevation areas that are recommended for seeking refuge from floods, and you should know several different routes to get to them
- ✓ Have an **evacuation plan and route**.
- ✓ Floods are among Earth's most common, and most destructive, natural hazards
- ✓ **Find out** your **community's evacuation plan** from the local emergency management agency. This should contain the safest routes to shelters
- ✓ Also have disaster supplies on hand such as flashlights, batteries, battery-operated radio, first aid kit and manual, emergency food and water, non-electric can opener, essential medicines, cash and credit cards, and sturdy shoes

Find out more about floods and additional safety tips visit <http://www.nilesema.com/floods1.htm>

According to FEMA, hurricane season in the **Atlantic** begins June 1st and ends November 30th. The **Eastern Pacific** hurricane season begins May 15th and also ends November 30th. These periods are when the waters are at their warmest and conditions are better suited for the creation of tropical storms and hurricanes. A hurricane is any tropical cyclone with a wind speed of over 74 mph being a category 1 all the way up to category 5 which will have winds speeds of 156 mph and greater. You can **safeguard your life and property** by taking precautions.

- ✓ The best way to survive a hurricane is to **evacuate the area** that is about to be hit
- ✓ If you cannot evacuate, cover windows with plywood or hurricane shutters
- ✓ bring outdoor furniture inside stay away from windows and glass doors
- ✓ Find shelter in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the highest level
- ✓ The **American Red Cross recommends** packing an emergency supply kit ahead of time. Include water, non-perishable food, a manual can opener, plenty of batteries, flashlights, a first-aid kit, medicines, important documents, clothing and bedding
- ✓ Turn off utilities, including propane tanks, if authorities advise it. Otherwise, set your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest setting
- ✓ Fill bathtubs and large containers to ensure you will have a clean water supply

To find out more, visit FEMA at <http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>



Wildfire - Are You Prepared? Most fires start small- a match, a cigarette, a spark. And most fires stay small. They burn a little patch of grass, and then fizzle out. However, there is one thing that **can change a fizzle into an inferno - WIND**. Are you prepared for what can happen when a fizzle meets a breeze?

- ✓ Many big fires are caused by small mistakes, so please be careful, especially on windy days
- ✓ Before starting a fire outdoors, find out what rules and fire restrictions you need to follow
- ✓ Stay with your barbeque grill while cooking, make sure you have a screen on your chimney, put cigarettes out cold, and soak fireplace ashes
- ✓ **The 5-P's of immediate evacuation.**
- ✓ **People/Pets** and other livestock too
- ✓ **Papers** (important documents)
- ✓ **Prescriptions** including eyeglasses and other medical needs
- ✓ **Pictures** (Irreplaceable memories)
- ✓ **Personal** computer

****Use the 5-P's only when possible - they are not required but provide guidelines to help you remember important things****

For wildfire preparedness tips, sample preparedness plans and emergency checklists, visit <http://firewise.org/> or www.fema.gov.