



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: John Dwyer, Coordinator / CCEMA

(217) 384-3826 / jdwyer@co.champaign.il.us

Amy Roberts, PR / CUPHD

(217) 531-4264 / aroberts@c-uphd.org

Champaign County EMA and Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urge People to Prepare for Severe Weather

Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Illinois is March 1-5

Champaign, IL – The Champaign County Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA) and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) urge everyone to prepare for severe weather. March 1-5, 2021 is Severe Weather Preparedness week in Illinois. In 2020, multiple storms did over \$5.2M in damages across Champaign County. Now is the time to prepare - before severe weather is predicted.

We cannot stop severe thunderstorms, lightning, or tornadoes from developing or happening, but there are things that everyone can do to minimize the impacts of severe weather on our lives and our families. According to the National Weather Service (NWS), the following precautions can be taken to prepare for severe weather:

1. STAY INFORMED

This can be done by monitoring a weather alert radio, local radio and TV broadcasts, NWS web pages, or various applications on computers and smart phones. DON'T just rely on one method - especially storm sirens - which are NOT designed to be heard indoors by everyone. Have multiple ways to receive information such as:

- Weather Alert Radio (offline until the system has been repaired- <https://www.weather.gov/ilx/cmi-outage>)
- Portable radio with battery backup
- Wireless emergency alerts on most smart phones - cell phone apps such as FEMA and Red Cross will send you warnings for your area but make sure to enable alerts
- Local TV and radio stations

- more -

2. HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Do this for your home, business, schools, and when you are traveling. Designate places to go to seek safe shelter from a tornado or severe thunderstorm. Pick two places to meet in case you are separated from your family or co-workers. While traveling or when away from home, know the names of the locations you are visiting - especially county and city names.

3. PREPARE YOURSELF & YOUR HOME FOR AN EMERGENCY

- Learn how to use a fire extinguisher, how to administer CPR, and how to turn off the electricity, gas, and water supplies in your home.
- Inspect your home for potential hazards such as weakened trees or limbs, cracked windows, or worn roofing.
- When you build a new structure - or renovate an existing one - there are ways to prevent wind damage to roofs, upper floors, and garages. Rafters, trusses, walls, and doors can all be reinforced.

4. HAVE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

Some storms produce power outages that will last for several days. Having the following items will help you cope with the disaster:

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Extra clothing and blankets
- An extra set of keys and cash
- Medications and a first aid kit
- Personal hygiene items
- Pet supplies
- A weather alert radio or portable AM/FM radio

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the NWS developed a Severe Weather Preparedness Guide which provides information about tornadoes, severe storms, lightning, and flooding along with recommended actions to take before, during, and after each of these weather events. It is available on the Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov. The NWS, Lincoln also has a Severe Weather Safety web page at: <https://www.weather.gov/ilx/> for numerous tornado, severe storm, flooding and lightning safety graphics.

Preparedness tips and information are also available through the Ready Illinois Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/ReadyIllinois) and Twitter Page (twitter.com/ReadyIllinois). For local information, go to Champaign County EMA (<https://www.facebook.com/ChampaignEMA>) and Twitter Page (twitter.com/ChampCoEMA).

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