

Be prepared for weather extremes

May 23 2013



Lightning over the Iowa State Center. Credit: Naipong Vang

Unsettled weather is an Iowa mainstay, and so is Inside's annual reminder of the university's severe weather safety and preparedness guidelines—for storms, extreme heat, flooding and more.

Lists of [weather](#) coordinators, evacuation maps and weather radio locations are available for individual campus buildings on the environmental health and safety website. The EH&S site also offers additional weather safety information and resources, including links to

National Weather Service websites and the safety tips listed below.

Severe weather

- Be aware of weather conditions at all times, especially if [severe weather](#) is predicted
- Sign up for an email or text alert from local news organizations
- Download a weather app for smart phones or mobile devices (many are free)
- If you receive a severe weather message, spread the word to your co-workers and family members, especially those who work outside

Lightning

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to harm you
- If you hear thunder—even in the distance—move to a safe place. Fully enclosed buildings are best. Sheds, picnic tables, tents and covered porches do not protect from lightning. If no safe buildings are nearby, jump in a car (with a hard metal top) and close all the windows. Stay put for at least 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.
- If you are planning outdoor activities, know where to go for safety and how long it will take to get there
- Consider postponing outdoor activities or moving them inside if thunderstorms are predicted
- Don't use a corded phone while it's thundering and lightning, unless it's an emergency. Cordless and cell phones are OK.
- Don't use any plumbing fixtures during a thunderstorm since water pipes conduct electricity

Flooding

- Head to higher ground if a flash flood warning is issued for your area
- Don't drive or walk through floodwaters
- If you live or work in a flood-prone area, be prepared to evacuate quickly and consider gathering emergency supplies

Tornadoes

- If you hear a tornado siren while inside a building, go to a windowless interior room on the lowest level; bathrooms often are best. Avoid buildings with large expansive roof structures, like the Armory. Many campus buildings have designated storm shelters.
- If you are walking across campus and hear the tornado siren, get to the nearest building and follow the same procedures
- If you are driving a car and debris begins flying around you, pull over and park

Heat

Know the signs of heat stress, such as:

- muscle spasms
- heavy sweating
- fainting, collapse
- blurred vision
- weakness, fatigue
- pale, clammy skin
- dizziness
- confusion, erratic behavior

To avoid heat stress, take frequent breaks in a cool, shaded area and

drink water. If symptoms appear serious, seek medical help.

Provided by Iowa State University

Citation: Be prepared for weather extremes (2013, May 23) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-05-weather-extremes.html>

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