

Weather/Severe

Did you know that North Carolina is one of the leading states for lightning related injuries in the United States?

Severe weather is possible throughout the year in North Carolina, and it is important to be prepared when it occurs. While the potential exist throughout the year, severe weather is most common during the spring.

Knowing what to do when severe weather occurs could mean the difference between life and death. When a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, you may have only a few minutes to make the right decisions. Understanding the basics of severe weather safety and preparing now could help reduce the chances of injury or death for you and your family.

Know the Difference – Severe Thunderstorm Watches vs Severe Thunderstorm Warnings:

Severe Thunderstorm Watch – Means the potential exist for a severe thunderstorm to develop. When a watch is issued, you should take the time to make sure you are prepared for severe weather. Be aware of rapidly changing conditions, and be ready to take immediate action. Monitor local media outlets for up-to-date weather information. Review what actions you will need to take should there be severe weather.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning – Means a “severe” thunderstorm has been detected. When a warning is issued, you should take shelter immediately. Severe thunderstorms are classified as storms producing winds \geq 58 MPH and/or hail 1” or greater in diameter (quarter size).

What to do during Severe Weather:

At Home:

Go inside of a permanent structure.

- Locate an interior room, away from windows.
- Avoid open areas such as porches. Lightning can still reach you!
- Do not use corded phones.
- Avoid plumbing. Do not do things such as washing hands, taking a shower, etc...
- Stay off items that are directly connected to electricity (stoves, computers, etc...).
- Remain inside until the storm has passed (see below for more information).
- If you cannot find a permanent structure, you can take shelter inside of a fully enclosed vehicle (excluding convertibles). Be cautious not to use radio equipment/electronic devices.
- If you cannot locate a safe area or are too far from a vehicle/structure, remember to avoid tall objects, isolated trees, water, wet items, metal objects, open fields, and the tops of hills/ridges.

At Work/School:

Go inside of a permanent structure.

- During high winds or tornadoes, avoid large open spaces such as gyms and auditoriums.
- Stay off of electrical equipment that may be directly connected to electricity (computers, corded phones, etc...)
- Avoid plumbing. Do not do things such as washing hands, taking a shower, etc...
- If necessary, look for Severe Weather Shelter Areas (located in select facilities) marked by this sign .
- Remain inside until the storm has passed.
- If you cannot find a permanent structure, you can take shelter inside of a fully enclosed vehicle (excluding convertibles). Be cautious not to use radio equipment/electronic devices

How you can prepare now:

Make a Plan –

Severe storms can bring a variety of hazards including deadly lightning, hail, heavy rain and damaging winds. Whether you are at home or work/school, you should have a plan in place outlining what you will do during severe weather, or any emergency.

Identify **shelter areas** in your home and office. Remember to look for the green Severe Weather Shelter Area signs on campus. During severe weather, especially during lightning storms, it is important to take shelter in permanent structure with plumbing and electricity. This will help protect you from lightning strikes.

Remember the 30/30 Rule –

Take shelter if you cannot count to 30 between the flash of lightning and the clap of thunder, and remain indoors for at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder is heard.

Lightning: Remember, there is NO safe place outside during lightning. Porches, parking decks, trees and related structures do not offer any protection. A common myth is that the rubber soles of your shoes or rubber tires protect you from lightning. This is false, as it is the metal frame a fully enclosed (hard topped) vehicle or the shell of a permanent, enclosed structure that provides protection. Visit <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/> for more on lightning safety.

Build a Kit –

Have an emergency kit for home and work that contains the essential items you may need following a disaster. Visit www.redcross.org/ for more information on how to build a kit for you and your family. Remember, you may be on your own for several hours or several days.

Get Informed –

Make sure you know how and when you will be alerted to emergencies both on campus and off campus. Get a NOAA Weather Alert Radio. This will alert you to severe weather watches and warnings impacting your area. Register for University emergency notification systems, such as text messaging. Also keep a battery powered radio with you at home and work. This will allow you to access up-to-date weather information if the power is lost.

Are you insured? - Make sure you have insurance to cover property damage. For example, if you rent an apartment or a house, you should have renters insurance. If you live in a flood prone area, you may need additional insurance (flood insurance). Visit <http://www.ncdoi.com/> for more information.

Weather/Winter

NCA&T and the surrounding region are presented each year with the threat of winter storms. While some winters may pass with little or no winter weather, the unique geographic location of the Piedmont makes this region susceptible to significant winter weather events on occasion. These events may include ice storms, snow or a mixture of snow, sleet and freezing rain.

It is important to be aware of the various types of winter events that impact this region, as well as the various hazards associated with winter storms. Many of the injuries and fatalities seen from winter storms occur from associated hazards such as vehicle accidents, fires, and other related hazards. Taking the time to prepare now could help to ensure the safety of you and your family during the next winter storm.

Know the Difference – Winter Weather Advisories, Winter Storm Watches and Winter Storm Warnings:

Winter Weather Advisory – Cold, Ice and/or Snow are expected to impact the area that may result in a “significant inconvenience” and require extra caution.

Winter Storm Watch – Means that there is a potential for significant winter weather to impact the area within 48 hours.

Winter Storm Warning – Means significant winter weather is either impacting the area, or is expected to impact the area within 24 hours.

How you can prepare for winter weather:

Make a Plan –

It is important to have a plan for your home and at work/school. At home, make sure you identify safe alternative heating and light sources should you lose power. Review the University’s policies on adverse weather closings and delays: [Adverse Weather Website](#)

Build a Kit –

Have an emergency kit for home and work that contains the essential items you may need following a disaster. Visit www.redcross.org/ for more information on how to build a kit for you and your family. Remember, you may be on your own for several hours or several days. This includes periods of extended power outages.

Get Informed –

Get a NOAA Weather Alert Radio to be notified of winter weather alerts in your area. Monitor local media stations for information on the weather, as well as University closings and delays. The University will announce closing and delays via various methods including local media and the University website.

Know the Hazards –

It is important to understand the hazards associated with winter weather. Understanding the hazards now will help you stay safe during the next winter weather event. Common hazards may include: loss of power and heat, loss of communication services, fires (as the result of candles, inappropriate use of heaters, etc...), transportation disruptions, falling trees and limbs, and medical emergencies (ie: heart attack caused by overexertion). Make sure you know how to prevent or plan to handle these hazards.

What to do during a Winter Storm:

If power is lost, use flashlights to light your home or office. Open flame items such as candles pose a significant fire hazard. Candles and other open flame devices are prohibited on campus due to the potential fire hazard and danger. Many of the facilities on campus are equipped with emergency lighting to help guide you to safety should you experience a power failure on campus.

Generators should **never** be used **indoors**.

Never use gas or charcoal grills indoors as a heating source or cooking appliance.

Use extreme caution when utilizing indoor electric and kerosene heaters. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Kerosene heaters are prohibited on campus, and only approved electrical heaters are allowed. If using a kerosene heater at home, always ensure you are using the correct fuel, and that you refuel the unit outdoors. Never leave a heater unattended, and always make sure there is at least 36 inches (3 feet) of clearance from combustibles around the heater.

Use a carbon monoxide detector in your home if you have gas heating, appliances, etc... This will help monitor and detect dangerous levels of carbon monoxide, which is a clear and odorless gas that may present many safety hazards if it leaks in your home.

If you must travel, allow extra time to get to your destination. Travel slowly, and allow plenty of distance from other vehicles.

When outside, use caution while walking and dress appropriately. Areas may be slick, and present a slipping hazard. If you are on campus and notice an area of concern, notify your supervisor or contact the Office of Emergency Management (Phone: 285-2405 or Email: Alert@ncat.edu). Dress warmly, in layers. Be sure to avoid overexertion, especially when removing snow and ice from walkways, driveways, etc...