

# Severe Weather Safety Tips For Campers

Tornadoes, Lightning, High Winds, Floods



# Reducing the Risk Posed by Severe Weather

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A Strategy to Lessen the Impact

1. Alertness. Make sure you get the warning
2. Awareness: Knowing what precautions to take and how to respond to the threat.

## Some Basic Definitions:

**Watch:** Conditions are favorable. Be Alert!  
Have a means to receive warnings.

**Warning:** It is occurring or is expected shortly.  
Take Action!

**Severe Thunderstorm:** Storm that produces one or more of the following: Wind greater than 50 knots (58 mph), hail 1 inch or larger, a tornado.

**Flash Flood:** A flood with a rapid onset, generally less than six hours.

# Getting the Warnings and Forecasts:



**NOAA Weather Radio:** <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>

For wireless devices: <http://mobile.weather.gov/>



# Thunderstorm Threats

- Tornadoes
- Downbursts (“straight line winds”)
- Large Hail
- Heavy Rain and Flash Flooding
- Lightning





## High Wind Threats: Flying Debris, Falling Trees

Winds in a Microburst can be over 100 mph.

**Spring Lake Subdivison: hit by 120 mph microburst on 5/31/1998**



# Safety Tips for Downbursts

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## Get Away From Trees

- Leave tents, cars and campers
- Get inside a sturdy shelter
- If none is available, seek a sheltered area away from trees
- Cars are better than nothing, but avoid parking near trees





Tornado Threats: Flying Debris, collapsing buildings

Airborne missiles up to the size of automobiles.



**Tornado damage: what if this was your campground?**

# Safety Tips for Tornadoes

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## Get to a Sturdy Structure

- Get below ground: a storm shelter or basement.
- If no basement, find a small interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building.
- Leave cars. They will go airborne in strong tornadoes.
- If caught in the open, hit the dirt! Find a ditch or culvert and protect your head and torso.
- Highway overpasses should be avoided.

# Lightning: The Most Common Threat



## If Outdoors:

- Get Indoors.
- Do not stand near tall trees or metal objects.
- If boating or swimming, head for shore.
- Avoid high elevations.
- If caught in the open, crouch down until there is a break in the storm.

## If Indoors:

- Avoid running water, electrical appliances.
- Get off corded phones.



## Flash Flood Threats: Washed out, flooded Roads

Only a few inches of flowing water can mean BIG trouble.

# Safety Tips for Flash Floods

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Your car makes a lousy boat

- Never attempt to cross a flooded road.
- Avoid low ground and areas subject to flooding.
- Be especially cautious at night.

# National Weather Service Grand Rapids

Web site:

[www.weather.gov/grr/](http://www.weather.gov/grr/)

We need ground truth! Check web site for information on how to become a SKYWARN weather spotter.

