



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT URGES RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR SEVERE WEATHER

Today's storms have the potential of producing lightning, high winds, hail and even tornadoes throughout Cook County and much of northern and central Illinois. The National Weather Service has issued a tornado watch in effect until 10 p.m. CST. Much of the severe weather will occur in the evening, so stay alert for warnings through outdoor sirens, smartphone apps, weather radios, TV, radio and Internet. Cook County's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) offers the following tips to keep your family and property safe.

Tornado:

- If you are outdoors, head for the designated shelter or a central area on the lowest floor of a nearby building.
- In a high-rise, get to the lowest floor possible and go to an interior room.
- Leave vehicles and mobile homes at once. Seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- If you are caught outside, lie flat in a ditch and cover your head. Do not get under bridges or overpasses.
- Never attempt to outrun a tornado.

Lightning:

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you – immediately move to safe shelter.
- Stay off corded phones, computers and other equipment that puts you in direct contact with electricity.
- Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.
- If you are caught outside with no safe shelter nearby – get off elevated areas such as hills or ridges, do not lie flat on the ground, never shelter under an isolated tree and stay away from bodies of open water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity like barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.

High Winds:

- Bring loose items – like patio furniture, potted plants and toys – indoors.
- If items are too large to bring indoors, anchor them so that they do not pose a hazard.
- Close and secure all doors and windows in your home or business.
- When you are outdoors, watch for flying debris. Tree limbs and street signs can come loose in high winds.
- Take extra caution if you are in a high profile vehicle like a truck or SUV. These types of vehicles are more likely to be pushed or even flip in high winds.
- If you see a downed power line:
 - Call police and your local utility company's emergency line immediately.
 - Do not touch anything that the power line is coming into contact with including tree branches and vehicles.
 - If a power line falls on your vehicle, stay inside your vehicle and do not touch any part of the metal frame.

For more information, media may contact Natalia Derevyanny at natalia.derevyanny@cookcountyil.gov or 312.603.8286.

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The Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management integrates first responders, their departments and resources from 134 Cook County municipalities, and serves as the central agency in Cook County for coordinating efforts to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all incidents, whether man-made or natural. For more information, visit our website at www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org.