



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 22, 2016**

**Contact: Natalia Derevyanny, 312.603.8286**

**COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
OFFERS SAFETY TIPS FOR SEVERE WEATHER**

Today's storms have the potential of producing lightening, high winds, hail and even tornadoes. Cook County's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) offers the following tips to keep your family and property safe.

**Lightning:**

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you – immediately move to safe shelter.
- Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical 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.

**Flooding:**

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling, a foot of water will float many vehicles and two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and pick-ups.
- Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water and you could be stranded or trapped.
- Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection. Turn around and go the other way.
- Do not try to take short cuts. They may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes.
- Be especially cautious driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If flood waters rise around your vehicle, abandon it and move to higher ground if you can do so safely.

**High Winds:**

- Bring loose items – like patio furniture, potted plants and toys – indoors.
- If items are too large to bring indoors, make sure to anchor them so that they do not pose a hazard to people or property.
- Close and secure all doors and windows in your home or business. A strong wind can rip them from their hinges.
- When you are outdoors, watch for flying debris. Tree limbs can break 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.

**Tornado:**

- 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.

**For all severe weather, please remember:**

- Stock your home shelter area with a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, extra batteries, water and a first aid kit.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle, stay inside your vehicle and do not touch any part of the metal frame
- 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.

For more information, media may contact Natalia Derevyanny at [natalia.derevyanny@cookcountyil.gov](mailto: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](http://www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org).