

When there is lightning in the area, NOAA officials advise anyone who is outside to seek shelter immediately. Safe shelters are fully enclosed buildings and do not include car ports, pavilions or picnic shelters. If a fully enclosed building is not available, seek shelter in a vehicle. If no building or vehicle is available, individuals caught outside during a storm should avoid lone trees, tall isolated objects and metal fences and poles.

Flash Floods

Flash floods usually occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, a dam or levee failure, or a sudden release of water held by an ice or debris jam, according to information released by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The number one weather-related killer in the U.S., flash flooding typically presents the biggest danger to those who think that a little water is no big deal.

“Flash floods can catch people because a storm one place could cause a flood somewhere else,” Volkert said.

Officials from the National Weather Service are quick to remind those who live in areas prone to flash floods that just six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock an adult off their feet and water that is two feet deep or more will float a car.

During periods when flash floods present an immediate threat, individuals caught outside should make their way to higher ground; stay away from drainage ditches, storm drains, high water and streams; and not attempt to cross flowing streams where the water is more than ankle high. If in a vehicle, never drive onto water covered roads – turn around and go another way.

Tornadoes

NOAA officials estimate that in an average year, approximately 1,200 tornadoes cause 70 fatalities and 1,500 injuries nationwide. Although tornadoes can occur in any state at any time of the year, peak tornado occurrence in the southern states is March through May while tornado season peaks in the northern states during late spring and summer.

“Tornado safety begins with a plan,” Volkert said. “Know where you can take shelter in your home or work, practice tornado drills and identify a place for everyone to meet after a disaster.”

Volkert said the best shelter in most homes or buildings is provided by interior rooms or basements. During a tornado, stay away from windows, get as low as possible and use mattresses, sleeping bags or thick blankets as cover. If caught outside during a tornado, find the lowest ground available away from trees and vehicles, lay face-down and protect your head with your arms.

Hurricanes

During the past few years, hurricanes coming out of the Atlantic have wreaked havoc on several areas along the country’s coast.

This year, officials are predicting an “above average” hurricane season with at least seven tropical storms developing into hurricanes from June 1 – Nov. 30.

“In this day and age, hurricanes are never a surprise,” Volkert said. “The key to staying safe, then, is listening to authorities and having an emergency plan and the resources needed to evacuate or to weather the storm and its after effects.”

Volkert said there are several things that should be considered long before a hurricane makes landfall. Soldiers and all their Family members should identify the safest areas in their home; plan escape routes; assess how vulnerable they are to flooding and high winds; and prepare an emergency kit.

Stay safe, stay connected

While there are many things that can be done to prepare for severe weather this summer, Volkert said constant vigilance must play a part in all severe weather scenarios.

“No matter where you are or what you are doing, don’t disconnect yourself from the outside world,” he said. “Have a weather radio and monitor local television or radio stations for severe weather information.”

Eyer said although there are many important things competing for a Soldier’s time in today’s busy Army, there is nothing that can’t wait until a bad storm passes.

“A Soldier takes time in his pre-combat checks and inspections, and that same time and consideration should be taken for this type of phenomena,” said Eyer.

For more information about summer weather threats, visit www.weather.gov. Information about preparing home emergency kits is available at www.acsim.army.mil/readymilitary. For information about the Army’s Safe Summer Campaign, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

-30-

SIDEBAR/INFO BOX

Get a kit

Officials recommend all home emergency kits include the following items:

- Water—at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food—nonperishable food for at least three days, consider items such as energy bars, freeze dried foods and dehydrated foods.
- Formula and diapers for any infants
- Food, water, other supplies and documents for any pets
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) battery-powered weather radio, battery-powered cell phone charger and extra batteries or hand crank powered devices
- First aid kit with dust masks, rated to at least N95, disinfectant and prescription medications
- Sanitation supplies such as disinfectant and garbage bags
- Important documents in watertight packaging—personal, financial and insurance—store copies in a separate location (safety deposit box, relatives or trusted friend)
- Family emergency plan and local maps

Source: Ready Army



**ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG**

