



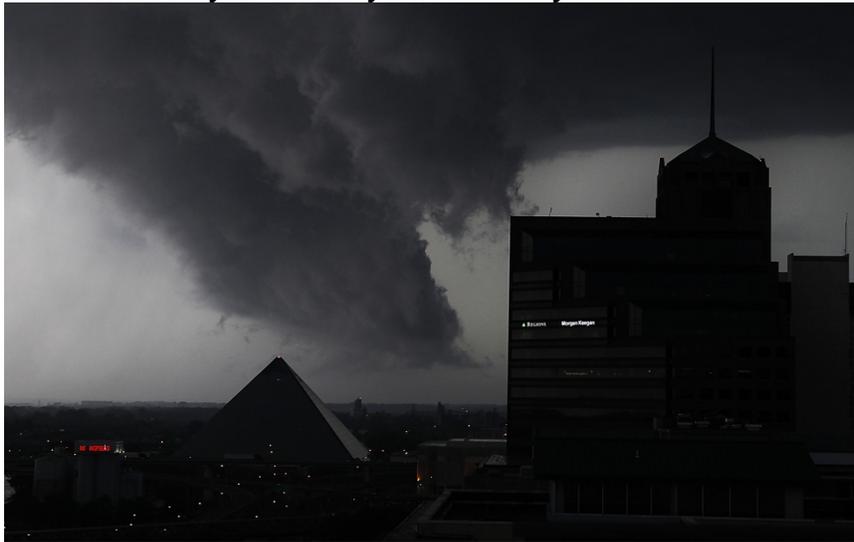
## Shelby County Office of Preparedness HLS / EMA

Bob Nations, Jr., Director  
1075 Mullins Station Road, Memphis, TN 38134  
901.515.2525  
[www.staysafeshelby.us](http://www.staysafeshelby.us)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 14, 2013

### **Tennessee Severe Weather Awareness Week Sunday February 17 - Friday 22, 2013**



**Photo Caption:** Ominous funnel clouds migrate from Arkansas to downtown Memphis during severe weather in 2012

Governor Bill Haslam has proclaimed February 17 - 22, 2013 as “Tennessee Severe Weather Awareness Week.” Every day of this special week is dedicated to a specific safety topic or hazard the public should be educated about. In conjunction with the State of Tennessee and the National Weather Service, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness, under the direction of Bob Nations, Jr., encourages citizens to learn about the severe weather threats that occur in Tennessee and get prepared now! Citizens are invited to participate in the state-wide tornado drill February 20 and practice emergency communications February 21.

**Sunday, February 17, 2013: Severe Weather Awareness Week Kick off!** Have a **disaster kit** for home, work, and auto to sustain you, your family, co-workers, and pets for at least seven days. Make sure the kit is portable in case evacuation is necessary.

**Page 1**

**Monday, February 18, 2013: Severe thunderstorms and damaging winds:**

- A **severe thunderstorm** usually develops as part of a cold front. It must have one or more of these components to be categorized as “severe”: Hail 3/4 inches in diameter, winds 58 miles per hour or tornadoes.
- **Straight line winds** are very strong winds that are not associated with rotation. The outdoor warning sirens will not be activated prior to these damaging winds.

Stay aware of changing weather by signing up for weather alerts with an ALERT FM, cell phone, or computer. Most alerts are free and available for everyone with an email address. Learn the meaning of watch, warning, and advisory. Seek shelter immediately if needed.

### **Tuesday, February 19, 2013: Lightning:**

According to the National Weather Service lightning kills 54 citizens annually in the United States. Hundreds struck by lightning sustain debilitating and permanent injuries. Learn how to protect yourself and stay safe. Seek shelter immediately when lightning occurs. Remember, “If Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”

### **Wednesday, February 20, 2013: Tornado Safety:**

A **tornado** is a violently rotating air column, commonly seen as a funnel with winds of less than 110 miles per hour. They are at least 250 feet across and can travel several miles before dissipating. Tornadoes are most dangerous at night when they cannot be seen. The Enhanced Fujita scale rates tornadoes by the damage caused. An EF5 is the most destructive and an EF0 is the least destructive. Create a “safe room” at home and work on the lowest floor of the building with the most walls surrounding it. If you have a storm shelter, you can register it with the Office of Preparedness.

- **A state-wide tornado drill will be held February 20. NOAA Weather Radio will test their activation system at approximately 9:30 a.m., CST.**
- **Schools, businesses, government offices, health care facilities, and many other facilities in Shelby County and across the state will demonstrate tornado safety by finding shelter and covering their heads during the drill.**
- **Outdoor Warning Systems will be tested as normal on Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. in Unincorporated Shelby County unless there is inclement weather in the county.**

### **Thursday, February 21, 2013: Flooding and Flash Flooding:**

**Flash flooding** occurs when too much rain from thunderstorms accumulate in a short period of time, usually in less than six hours. Ditches overflow and drains clog, causing water to fill streets and streams. When driving, be smart, “Turn Around - Don’t Drown!” Flash flooding can turn into **major flooding**. Shelby County experienced major flooding in 2011 during the “Flood of the Century.” Low lying areas were below water, homes and businesses were destroyed and hundreds of citizens were evacuated to shelters.

- **There will be a Communications Drill Feb 21 as the Shelby County Office of Preparedness Emergency Operations Center (EOC) test communications equipment. They will pass a message from county to county and then to the regional office. Residents and organizations can participate by reviewing/updating emergency contact lists and verifying an out-of-area emergency contact.**

**Friday, February 22, 2013: NOAA All-Hazards Radio:** Make sure you have a NOAA All-Hazards Radio with you at all times (with the SAME feature, a tone alert and battery back-up.)

These radios are inexpensive and available in drug stores and grocery stores. They are tested every Wednesday by the National Weather Service. Weather alerts as well as Amber alerts are broadcast to the programmed area.

The Office of Preparedness also recommends you educate yourself and your loved ones about disasters and learn what to do before, during and after an unexpected weather event. Most municipalities in Shelby County offer free Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) disaster preparedness training. The National Weather Service in Memphis also conducts free SkyWarn Storm Spotter classes routinely.

Take the week of February 17 - 22, 2013 to learn about and prepare for severe weather.

For more information on severe weather and preparedness training, please call the Shelby County Office of Preparedness at 901.515.2525.

**Resources:** [www.staysafeshelby.us](http://www.staysafeshelby.us)  
[www.readyshelby.us](http://www.readyshelby.us)  
[www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org)  
[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)