



News Release

For Immediate Release
February 24, 2020

Tennessee Severe Weather Awareness Week

The Shelby County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Office invites you to learn how to survive severe weather during **Tennessee's Severe Weather Awareness Week, February 23 – 29, 2020**. Situational awareness and knowing where to shelter are your best defenses in severe weather. The more we practice safety maneuvers, the more confidently we will react during a severe weather event. Each day of Severe Weather Awareness Week is dedicated to an initiative for your safety!



Sunday, February 23: **SKYWARN STORM SPOTTER**

Volunteer SKYWARN storm spotters are the eyes and ears on the ground reporting severe weather and storm damage to the National Weather Service (NWS). Spotters' eyewitness accounts, combined with Doppler radar, assist the NWS in issuing life-saving warnings to the public. Become a Skywarn Storm spotter! Free Mid-South spotter training can be found at www.weather.gov.

Monday, February 24: **FLOODING**

Major River Flooding: River flooding in the Mid-South often occurs after snowmelt upstream and excessive rainfall. This slow moving disaster resulted in a presidentially declared disaster for Shelby County in 2011 requiring evacuations and sheltering of citizens.

Flash Flooding results from thunderstorms and excessive rainfall. Water overwhelms drainage systems and back-flows into low lying areas. Flash flooding occurs suddenly and is most dangerous at night. Six (6") inches of fast-moving water can knock you off your feet, twelve (12") inches can take away a small car.

Safety Tips:

- Know the alerts: **Flood Watch:** conditions are favorable. Know where higher ground is located. Stay ready! **Flood Warning:** Flooding is imminent. Move to higher ground! Act now!
- Practice evacuating and sheltering-in-place with your family.
- Learn 2 ways out of your neighborhood.
- Never drive into water of unknown depth on the road...instead "turn around, don't drown!"
- Visit www.floodsmart.gov to find your property's flood risk and purchase flood insurance.
- Visit www.floodsafety.noaa.gov for more information.

Tuesday, February 25: **LIGHTNING: THE UNDERRATED KILLER**

Cloud to ground lightning strikes can occur any time thunderstorms are near.

Safety Tips:

- Reschedule outdoor activities.
- Keep an eye to the sky and look for darkening skies, lightning flashes and increasing winds.
- Seek shelter in a sturdy building. Remember, when thunder roars, go indoors!
- If no shelter is available, stay away from tall objects such as trees or electrical poles.
- If you are in water, boating or swimming, get out of the water and seek shelter.



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Wednesday, February 26: **TORNADO SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS**

Tornadoes, mobile, destructive vortexes of violently rotating winds having the appearance of a funnel-shaped cloud, may occur any time. They are particularly dangerous at night.

Safety Tips:

- Listen to NOAA radio for weather alerts.
- Know the alerts: **Tornado watch:** Conditions are favorable. Stay alert! **Tornado Warning:** A tornado has been seen on radar or reported by a spotter. Take shelter!
- Designate a “safe place” to shelter. Underground is best, such as a basement or storm shelter. If not possible, go to the center room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building.
- If you are in a vehicle, do not try to outrun the tornado. Try to seek shelter in a sturdy building. If no building is near, pull over, keep seat belt on. Cover head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket.
- If you are in a mobile or manufactured building, get out! Find a sturdy building for shelter.

Thursday, February 27: **SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS**

Severe thunderstorms can be deadly and can occur year round. To reach severe limits, a thunderstorm must include either a tornado, winds of 58 mph or hail 1 inch thick.

Safety Tips:

- Listen to NOAA radio for weather alerts.
- Know the alerts: **Severe Thunderstorm watch:** Conditions are favorable. Stay alert! **Severe thunderstorm warning:** Take shelter! Act now!
- Move from outdoors into a sturdy building.
- Indoors: unplug appliances and electronics. Do not use landline phones or plumbing.
- If no sturdy building is available, shelter in a vehicle with a metal top and sides.

Friday, February 28: **NOAA WEATHER RADIO (NWR) AND EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS)**

NWR: The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR) is a nation-wide public service system of radio stations broadcasting continuous all hazards forecasts, alerts and warnings (AMBER, weather, hydrologic, forecasts) from the National Weather Service Office.

Safety Tip: Invest in a NOAA all-hazards radio with battery back-up and tone alert to receive alerts and warnings.

EAS: Our national public warning system, the EAS, allows the president to communicate with the public during a national emergency through cable TV, wireless cable system, satellite digital audio radio service and direct broadcast satellite. The EAS is utilized by state and local authorities to send emergency information such as AMBER alerts or weather warnings.

Safety Tip: Ensure your devices are capable of receiving EAS alerts. Heed the warnings.

Saturday, February 29: **IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Traditional communications may be cut off during a disaster, but social media, such as Twitter and Facebook may allow officials to push out emergency information in real time. Follow us on Facebook @staysafeshelby and on Twitter @ShelbyCoEMHLS

Safety Tip: Download emergency apps such as FEMA (www.FEMA.gov) and ReadyTN (www.tn.gov/tema/ready-tn.html) to devices to receive emergency alerts.