

**Be Aware
Be Prepared
Take Action**



**A Guide for
Alerts and Warnings**



FEMA

August 2021



If you receive an alert on your TV, phone, or radio:

Take the actions listed here.
Follow instructions from local officials.
Follow the instructions in the alert.



Advisory and Statement

Be aware! A hazard is expected to occur in your area or nearby, but its impact is not expected to be life-threatening.



Watch

Be prepared! A hazard may possibly occur in your area or nearby.



Warning

Take action! A hazard is expected to occur or is already occurring in your area or nearby, and its impact may be serious.

“THIS IS A TEST”

Officials sometimes send test or practice messages. Consider using this as a reminder to check your emergency plan and supplies. Review the 12 Ways to Prepare for more steps to take.

Some hazards may not have an advisory, watch, or warning. Use the **12 Ways to Prepare to be ready for hazards that may happen suddenly.** Visit [ready.gov/be-informed](https://www.ready.gov/be-informed) to learn more about hazards not included in this guide. This is general guidance. Always defer to the alert.

12 Ways to Prepare *Before* a Disaster Happens:



Sign Up for Alerts and Warnings



Make a Plan



Save for a Rainy Day



Practice Emergency Drills



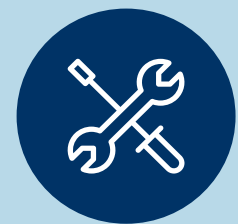
Test Family Communication Plan



Safeguard Documents



Plan with Neighbors



Make Your Home Safer



Know Evacuation Routes



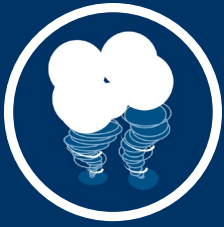
Assemble or Update Supplies



Get Involved in Your Community



Document and Insure Property



Tornado



Tornado Watch

Be prepared! There is the **potential** that a tornado will develop.



A tornado may occur within the next **2 to 4 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Review your emergency plan.



Check on family members and friends to make sure they have a plan.



Be prepared to go to your safe shelter.



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground. Most tornadoes last less than 10 minutes.



Tornado Warning

Take action! A tornado is **occurring** or **about to occur** in the area or nearby.



A tornado may occur within the next **few minutes to half hour**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Go to your safe shelter immediately. Go to a sturdy building or small, interior, windowless room on the building's lowest level.



Stay away from windows, doors, and exterior walls.



Take cover. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



If you cannot go to a safe place, take cover.

Use your arms, a coat, or blanket to cover your head and neck.



Do not try to outrun a tornado.



Do not hide under a bridge or overpass. Go to a low, flat location.



Hurricane



Hurricane Watch

There is a **possibility** of hurricane conditions within the next several days.



Hurricane-force winds are possible in the next **48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your area's risk and whether you live in an evacuation zone.



Follow your emergency plan.



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Protect your property and gather important documents.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Do not drive around barricades.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

A hurricane (called a “typhoon” in the Western Pacific) is a storm system that forms over warm ocean waters and can cause strong winds, heavy rains, and both coastal and inland flooding.



Hurricane Warning

Take action! Hurricane conditions are **expected** within the next several days.



Hurricane-force winds are expected in the next **36 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Follow instructions from local officials.



Follow your emergency plan.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Do not drive around barricades.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.



Extreme Wind



Extreme Wind Warning

Take action! Dangerously strong winds are **occurring** and sustained hurricane winds **may occur**.



Extreme wind is occurring or will occur within **1 hour**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Follow your emergency plan.



Go to your safe shelter or small, interior, windowless room. Stay in the safe shelter and do not go into the calm of the hurricane eye.



Take cover now. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

Extreme wind is wind greater than 115 mph and may signal that hurricane winds may begin shortly.

Extreme Wind Warning (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Extreme Wind Watch.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Slow down!



Pull aside; stay alive! Move to the road's shoulder, turn on the car's hazard lights, and stay in the car.



Be cautious if driving in or near high-profile vehicles, which may be pushed by wind.



Storm Surge



Storm Surge Watch

Be prepared! There is a **possibility** of life-threatening flooding.



A storm surge may occur within **48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk.



Follow instructions from local officials and evacuate immediately if told to do so.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Do not drive around barricades.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

Storm surge is a life-threatening flood that comes from rising water that moves inland.



Storm Surge Warning

Take action! There is a **danger** of life-threatening flooding.



A storm surge may occur within **36 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk.



Follow instructions from local officials and evacuate immediately if told to do so.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Do not drive around barricades.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.



Winter Storm



Winter Storm Watch

Be prepared! There is a **possibility** of a winter storm containing snow, sleet, ice, wind, or a combination of these hazards.



A winter storm may occur within **24 to 72 hours.**



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Gather supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Limit your time outside and wear warm clothes.



Prepare for power outages and have a plan in case you lose heat.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Put an emergency kit in your car.



Stay off the roads.

A winter storm brings snow, sleet, ice accumulation, wind, or a combination of these hazards.



Winter Storm Warning

Take action! A winter storm is **occurring** or is **about to occur**; expect snow, sleet, ice, wind, or a combination of these hazards.



A winter storm will occur within **12 to 48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Limit your time outside and wear warm clothes.



Prepare for power outages and have a plan in case you lose heat.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Put an emergency kit in your car.



Stay off the roads.



Blizzard



Blizzard Warning

Take action! A blizzard is **expected** or **occurring**.



A blizzard will occur within **12 to 48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Limit your time outside and wear warm clothes.



Prepare for power outages and have a plan in case you lose heat.

A blizzard is a winter storm during which snow is blown by sustained winds of 35 mph, greatly reducing visibility. A blizzard will reduce visibility to less than one-fourth mile for three hours or more.

Blizzard Warning (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Blizzard Watch. Pay attention to Winter Storm Watches, which may alert you to blizzard conditions.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



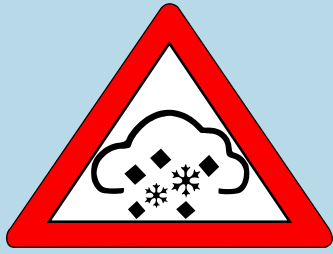
Put an emergency kit in your car.



Stay off the roads.



Ice Storm



Ice Storm Warning

Take action! Dangerous ice accumulation is **expected** due to freezing rain.



An ice storm will occur within **12 to 48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Limit your time outside and wear warm clothes.



Prepare for power outages and have a plan in case you lose heat.

An ice storm occurs when significant ice accumulation causes dangerous travel conditions and damage to trees and power lines resulting in power outages.

Ice Storm Warning (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Ice Storm Watch. Pay attention to Winter Storm Watches, which may alert you to ice storm conditions.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Put an emergency kit in your car.



Stay off the roads.



Snow Squall



Snow Squall Warning

Take action! A sudden whiteout is **occurring** or **about to occur**.



A snow squall is **occurring** or **may occur soon**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Check supplies, food, and water, and make a plan to use these supplies for at least 3 days.



Limit your time outside and wear warm clothes.



Prepare for power outages and have a plan in case you lose heat.

A snow squall is a 30- to 60-minute storm that brings whiteout conditions. Snow and gusty winds may cause low visibility and icy roads, making driving dangerous.

Snow Squall Warning (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Snow Squall Watch.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Reduce your speed, turn on headlights and hazards, and keep space between you and the car in front of you.



Stay off the roads, if possible.



Flood



Flood Watch

Be prepared! There is a **possibility** of flooding.



Flooding may occur within the next **6 to 48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk. Move to higher ground if in a flood-prone area.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Protect your property if you have time and are staying in place.



Put important documents in a waterproof container.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid flood waters.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

Flooding is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. Flooding may last days or weeks.



Flood Warning

Take action! Flooding is **occurring** or **about to occur**.



Flooding is **occurring** or **about to occur**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk. Move to higher ground if in a flood-prone area.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Protect your property if you have time and are staying in place.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid flood waters.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.



Flash Flood



Flash Flood Watch

Be prepared! There is a **possibility** of a flash flood.



A flash flood may occur within the next **several hours or days**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk. Move to higher ground if in a flood-prone area.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Protect your property if you have time and are staying in place.



Put important documents in a waterproof container.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid flood waters.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

A flash flood is a damaging and life-threatening, rapid rise of water into an area that's normally dry. A flash flood may occur within minutes to hours after an event like intense rainfall or dam failure.



Flash Flood Warning

Take action! A dangerous, life-threatening flood is **occurring** or **about to occur**.



A flash flood is **occurring** or **about to occur**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Move to higher ground immediately if in a flood-prone area.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Protect property only if it is safe to do so.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid flood waters.



Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.



Severe Thunderstorm



Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Be prepared! There is a **possibility** of severe thunderstorms.



A severe thunderstorm watch typically lasts **4 to 8 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



When thunder roars, go indoors. Find a place to shelter.



Secure outside furniture and property.



Unplug appliances.



Prepare for a power outage.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Stay in your car if you cannot go indoors.



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid touching metal surfaces in the car.

A severe thunderstorm is a dangerous storm that includes lightning.



Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Take action! Severe weather is **happening**. There may be considerable or destructive damage.



A severe thunderstorm warning typically lasts **1 hour**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



When thunder roars, go indoors. Find a place to shelter.



Avoid using running water or landline phones.



Unplug appliances.



Avoid isolated trees, concrete, and metal that lightning could hit.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Stay in your car.



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters.



Avoid touching metal surfaces in the car.



Dust Storm/Blowing Dust



Dust Storm/Blowing Dust Warnings

Take action! A dust storm is **occurring** or **about to occur**. Expect a sudden drop in visibility.



Dust storms typically last **20 to 120 minutes**. Blowing dust typically lasts **90+ minutes**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Go to a safe, sturdy indoor location.



Get indoors. Close all windows and turn off all air conditioning units.



Stay inside.

A dust storm or blowing dust (sometimes called a “haboob”) occurs when there are strong, dust-filled winds over an area that reduce visibility to one-fourth mile or less. These winds are typically winds of 25 mph or greater.

Dust Storm/Blowing Dust Warnings (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Dust Storm Watch.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Be prepared for a sudden drop in visibility.



Pull aside; stay alive! Pull over as far as possible, turn off lights, set the emergency brake, and take your foot off of the brake pedal.



Stay off the roads.



High Wind



High Wind Watch

Be prepared! Sustained, strong winds are **possible**.



A high wind event may occur within the next **12 to 48 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Review your emergency plan.



Be prepared to go to your safe shelter or small, interior, windowless room on the building's lowest level.



Protect your property. Put away or tie down loose outdoor furniture and objects.



Prepare for power outages.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Delay or adjust travel plans.

A high wind event typically occurs when there are sustained winds of 40 mph or higher for one hour or more, or when there are wind gusts of 58 mph or higher for any duration.



High Wind Warning

Take action! Sustained, strong winds are **occurring** or **about to occur**.



A high wind event may be **occurring** or **about to occur** and may last up to **12 hours or more**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Go to a safe, sturdy location and stay away from windows.



Stay away from trees and power lines.



Take cover. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.



Prepare for power outages.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Stay off the roads.



Slow down and watch for flying debris, downed power lines, and branches.



Be cautious if driving in or near high-profile vehicles, which may be pushed by wind.



Tsunami



Tsunami Watch

Be prepared! A series of dangerous and powerful waves and strong currents that may cause flooding to occur is **possible**.



A tsunami may last for **several hours or days**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Know your risk.



Know your evacuation route.



Be prepared to take action if necessary.



Move away from coasts to high ground.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Use evacuation routes, which should be safe from flooding.



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters. Focus on getting to higher ground.

A tsunami is a series of enormous ocean waves caused by earthquakes, underwater landslides, volcanic eruptions, or asteroids. Scientists cannot predict when and where the next tsunami will happen.



Tsunami Warning

Take action! A series of dangerous and powerful waves and strong currents that may cause flooding is **expected** or **occurring**.



A tsunami may last for **several hours or days**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Follow instructions from local officials.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so or if you see natural signs of a tsunami. Do not wait!



Move away from coasts to high ground.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



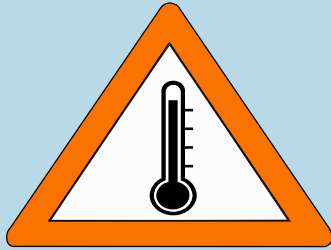
Use **evacuation routes**, which should be safe from flooding.



Turn Around Don't Drown® Do not drive through flood waters. Focus on getting to higher ground.



Extreme or Excessive Heat



Excessive Heat Watch

Be prepared! Dangerous high temperatures and/or humidities are **possible**.



Extreme heat may occur within the next **24 to 72 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Check on family members and friends to make sure they have a plan to stay cool.



Learn the signs of heat-related illness.



Prepare your home to keep heat out.



Wear light, loose clothing.



Avoid high-energy outdoor activities.



Drink fluids.

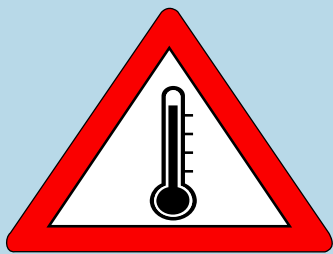


If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Look before you lock. Do not leave people or pets in closed cars.

Extreme or excessive heat (sometimes called a “heat wave”) is a period of abnormally hot weather that lasts more than two days. Heat waves can occur with or without high humidity.



Excessive Heat Warning

Take action! Dangerous high temperatures and/or humidities are **occurring** or **about to occur**.



Extreme heat is occurring or will occur within the next **12 hours**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Cool down. Use air conditioning.



Find shade if outside.



Watch for signs of heat-related illness.



Wear light, loose clothing.



Avoid high-energy outdoor activities.



Drink fluids.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Look before you lock. Do not leave people or pets in closed cars.



Nuclear Explosion



Nuclear Explosion Warning

Take action! A nuclear explosion is **occurring** or is **about to occur**.



A nuclear explosion may occur with **little to no warning**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Get inside and go to the basement or middle of the building. Stay away from windows.



Stay inside for 24 hours unless local officials provide other instructions.



Use your emergency supplies, food, and water. Do not consume foods or liquids that were outside and uncovered.



Remove contaminated clothing and wipe off exposed skin.

A nuclear explosion emits dangerous radiation and fallout. Fallout is most dangerous in the first few hours after the detonation. After an explosion, it will take 10 to 15 minutes before fallout begins to arrive.

Nuclear Explosion Warning (Cont.)



Please note:

There is no Nuclear Explosion Watch.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Get inside. Vehicles will not provide adequate protection.



Go to the basement or middle of the building. Stay away from windows.



Volcano



Volcanic Eruption Watch

Be prepared! A volcanic eruption **may occur** or is **occurring**.



Officials **may not be certain of the exact time** a volcano will erupt.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Avoid areas downstream of the eruption.



Protect your home from falling ash.



Cover ventilation openings and seal doors and windows.



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Do not drive in heavy ash fall.

A volcano is an opening in the Earth's crust that allows molten rock, gases, and debris to escape to the surface.



Volcanic Eruption Warning

Take action! A volcanic eruption is **occurring** or is **about to occur**.



A volcano is **erupting** or **will erupt very soon**.



If You Get this Alert at Home:



Evacuate immediately if told to do so.



Cover ventilation openings and seal doors and windows if sheltering in place.



Protect yourself from falling ash.



If You Get this Alert in Your Car:



Do not drive in heavy ash fall.

FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Home #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Mobile #: _____

Email: _____

Important Medical or Other Info: _____

Name: _____ Mobile #: _____

Email: _____

Important Medical or Other Info: _____

Name: _____ Mobile #: _____

Email: _____

Important Medical or Other Info: _____

SCHOOL, CHILD CARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Emergency/Hotline #: _____

Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Emergency/Hotline #: _____

Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name: _____ Mobile #: _____
Home #: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT

Name: _____ Mobile #: _____
Home #: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACE

Indoor: _____
Instructions: _____

Neighborhood: _____
Instructions: _____

Out-of-Town Neighborhood: _____
Instructions: _____

IMPORTANT NUMBERS/INFORMATION

Police: _____ Fire: _____
Doctor: _____ Dentist: _____
Medical Insurance: _____
Policy Number: _____
Hospital/Clinic: _____



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