



SEVERE WEATHER PROTOCOL

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TYPES OF SEVERE WEATHER IN OUR AREA:

1. Tornadoes-Rare, but do happen-Low Risk
2. Severe Thunderstorms-Moderate Risk, Possibility of power loss and/or fire from lightning, also possible injury to someone.
3. Flooding, Very low risk
4. Heavy snow/Blizzards-Moderate to high risk

SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES:

Anytime, severe weather is possible, or probable, when a church service is going on, or another church wide activity is taking place, one of more members of the Safety and Security Team, should have a battery operated radio and be in contact with the National Weather Service Emergency Notification announcement about any severe weather approaching our area, with directions for safety action, to keep abreast of the situation.

In the unlikely case of a tornado approaching, before, during, or right after a service or activity, an announcement should be quietly made to the congregation, and they should be calmly escorted to safe, well marked areas, without windows, hallways, restrooms, conference room, and library.

As much as possible, chairs should be provided for the oldest and or disabled members, others should sit on the floor facing the wall.

If children are in Sunday School, Pre-School or Nursery, they should be kept calm and reassured and quickly and quietly be reunited with family members.

Able bodied younger members could use the hallways and restrooms upstairs.

Basement is a last resort, due to needing stairs to access, windows on one side and a lot of debris, and no chairs. IF basement is needed, members should sit at back of basement as far away from windows as possible facing the wall. There are a few small windowless closets where a few people could take shelter.

Clear signs have been posted for 'shelter rooms', so there is no confusion about where to go, but Safety team members and Ushers will to escort people to safe areas.

If severe thunder storms are possible, Safety Team will be monitoring for weather alerts.

During a loss of power automatic emergency lights will come on in the main church areas.

Flashlights will be located in different parts of the church (e.g. sanctuary, fellowship hall, classrooms, worship closet, music room).

After storm has passed the Safety Team and Trustees will check for any damage from lightning, hail or high winds.

They will check with the national weather station and Nixle as to any damage to roads, downed branches, or power lines that might affect travel home.

Heavy snow or blizzard usually has been predicted by various weather stations. Most likely there would be enough advance notice of an approaching heavy snow/blizzard event, and people would not be at church.

A plan should be established to check on older members who live alone to determine their needs after a severe storm.

Safety Team Duties during a severe weather event:

1. Shelter rooms have magnet signs on the side of the designated shelter room doors.
2. Have battery operated radios available and assign a team member to monitor National Weather Station during a possible storm approaching area and keep others informed.
3. Safety Team members and Ushers escort adult members to shelter rooms. Have another team member gather children and bring to families.
4. During a severe thunder store and/or power failure, keep congregation in sanctuary, work with musicians to lead singing to keep spirits up. Bring all children/infants to families. Locate and use emergency lighting and flashlights.
5. After any severe weather event is over, MERT members will check for any health issues. Safety Team members will work with Trustees to check for any damage to buildings, grounds or property before releasing congregants to their cars.
6. After storm event has passed and everyone is home safely, Safety Team, Trustees and Ushers will evaluate how everything went and make changes to protocols as needed.