

## News Release

*For Immediate Release*

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### Severe Weather Safety

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage residents to take an active role in staying safe during severe weather. As spring continues, it is time again to think of severe weather and the risks that it brings. The odds of being struck by lightning are around 1 in 500,000; it is one of the leading causes of weather-related fatalities. Most strikes occur to those who work outside or engage in outdoor recreational activities. 15–34-year-olds account for almost half of all lightning strike victims.

Lightning can occur anytime or anyplace, however, one usually sees lightning along with thunderstorms. Thunderstorms may also produce other hazards such as powerful winds over 50 mph, hail, flash flooding, or tornadoes.

Prepare for Severe Weather:

- Be aware of your risks for severe weather in your area. Know the warning systems in your community and be active in those systems to stay aware of watches and warnings.
- Make your emergency plans and share with loved ones. Creating an emergency plan doesn't only help you in a rapidly changing situation, it may give your loved ones an idea of where or how to help you if the situation becomes life-threatening.
- Prepare your residence. Mitigate your landscape to include trimming or cutting trees that may pose a threat to damaging your home. Use surge protectors for appliances and electronic devices.

During Thunderstorms:

- Pay attention to alerts and warnings provided by your local emergency organizations and the National Weather Service.
- Avoid electronic usage on devices connected to an electrical outlet.
- Avoid running water, bathing, or showering during active weather warnings.

Following a thunderstorm there are hazards to watch for as you begin to emerge from shelter.

- Avoid any running water across the roads or walkways. It only takes 6 inches for fast moving water to knock you off your feet. A vehicle can be swept away in only one

foot of swift water. Do not cross water in roadways if you are unable to see if the road has been washed away or not. Turn around.

- Watch for downed power lines and trees. Do not go around safety barriers to access unsafe areas. Not all hazards may be visible to the naked eye.

For more information on how to be safe during severe weather, please visit [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) or call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram, visit [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov), or stop by the office at 404 West 10th Street in McCook.

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