



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Department of Emergency Preparedness

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News Release

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Tornado, Lightning and Thunderstorm Awareness

County Reminds Residents: "When Flooded Turn Around, Don't Drown"

FREDERICK, MD – Thunderstorms are in the forecast for Frederick County and it is important to understand what to do when warnings are issued. The National Weather Service (NWS) emphasizes that the mid-Atlantic region is at risk for flooding, damaging winds, tornadoes, hail, and lightning storms every year. Maryland experiences severe storms regularly during the spring and is particularly at risk for flooding, but also experiences hailstorms and even tornadoes. Maryland has had nearly 100 tornadoes in the past ten years and Frederick has recently experienced an EF-0 tornado on May 30, 2019.

The Department of Emergency Preparedness reminds citizens to take shelter immediately after a Tornado Warning. A Tornado Warning means a tornado is imminent or occurring. An underground area, such as a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection from a tornado. If an underground shelter is unavailable, consider the following:

- Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible
- Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls
- Stay in the center of the room, and avoid corners because they attract debris
- Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead
- *Avoid* auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums that have flat, wide-span roofs.

When you hear thunder or see lightning, move inside right away. Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning flash before leaving shelter.

Residents can be "weather prepared" by ensuring that they know how to receive a warning, have a plan, and practice safety tips. Sign up for emergency alerts at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/ALERT.

"Every year, Maryland gets severe thunderstorms that target localized communities," said Christopher Strong, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Baltimore/Washington Forecast Office. "If Marylanders get National Weather Service warnings from phone apps and/or weather radio, and have a plan for what to do, we can all stay safe from the damaging winds, large hail, flooding, tornadoes, and lightning."

(more)

The Frederick County Division of Emergency Management works closely together with NWS to identify and monitor severe weather systems, develop preparedness plans and safety information, and coordinate the response to these storms.

Residents can also take actions to remain safe by practicing the following tips:

- During flooding, never drive over an area where water is flowing over the road and you cannot see the pavement. Turn around, don't drown!
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued or you are experiencing strong winds, get to a sturdy shelter and stay indoors away from windows.
- Tornadoes can form rapidly in the right conditions. If there is a tornado warning or you see a tornado, quickly get inside and go to the lowest floor possible.
- If you hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck from a fringe lightning strike. More than 98% of lightning casualties are from people outdoors—get indoors or inside your vehicle if possible.

For more information on preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies and hazards, visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/READY and the [NWS "Weather Ready" website](#). Additionally, the Department of Emergency Preparedness can be contacted at 301-600-1746 or via e-mail at EM@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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