



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

Volume 9 Issue 06

Risk Management Issues

June 2009



JUNE TEXAS WEATHER



TEXAS WEATHER. Where can you go and get hot weather, cold weather, rain, flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, lightning, and even a beautiful summer day? But with the beautiful summer weather comes some violent, severe weather. Severe weather affects everything and everyone in the Lone Star State from adults, children, homes, places of business, and even your personal property. Two of the best precautions for severe weather are being prepared and having knowledge of what to do in severe weather. Early preparation can save lives and property when disastrous weather occurs. Will you be ready?



LIGHTNING: On the average, six people die each year in Texas from lightning strikes. If you are caught outside during a thunderstorm:

- * Get inside a building **immediately.**
- * Keep away from metal objects.
- * Stay below ground level if possible
- * away from hill-tops, open beaches, fields and most importantly stay away from open water and tall trees.
- * Seek shelter under a relatively small tree.
- * Seek shelter inside your car.
- * If you feel your hair stand on end, squat with your head between your knees. **DO NOT lie flat!!!!**



- * If you are inside avoid using the telephone, or other electrical appliances.
- * **Do not** take a bath, shower or stand near plumbing piping.
- * Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and many occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.
- * "Heat Lightning" is actually from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard.
- * Lightning strike victims carry **NO** electrical charge and should be attended to **immediately.**



When planning your summer vacations for camping, swimming, fishing, golf, or any other outdoor activities, stay up to date on weather conditions. Have a safe summer vacation.

Flooding

We have all watched TV and seen people stranded in high water standing on the top of their vehicles or having to be rescued by emergency personnel due to flooding. The lifting power of a flash flood is hard for most of us to understand, but the facts are:

- * Water displaces 1,500 pounds of weight for every foot it rises.
- * If a car weighs 3,000 pounds, it takes only **two feet** of water to send it downstream.
- * It only takes **6 inches** of water to sweep a person off their feet.
- * **One foot** of water can cause a compact vehicle to lose control and “float” away.



Nearly half of all flood related deaths occur in vehicles. Most of these deaths take place when people drive into flooded areas. Once a car is swept away the vehicle becomes a death trap because of the electric windows and door locks, trapping the occupants inside.

Flood Watch

- * Move your valuables to higher floors of your home.
- * Ensure that your vehicle has a full tank of gas and you have packed any items that you may need.
- * Have supplies together if needed:
 - ◆ Flashlights and extra batteries.
 - ◆ Portable, battery operated radio and extra batteries.
 - ◆ First aid kit and manual
 - ◆ Emergency food and water
 - ◆ Non-electric can opener
 - ◆ Essential medicines
 - ◆ Cash/credit cards
 - ◆ Sturdy shoes
- * **DO NOT** drive through high water or flooded areas.
- * Observe all warning signs and **DON'T** take any chances with your or your families life.
- * No destination or appointment is worth the loss of any life.
- * **DON'T** become a statistic.



Straight Line Winds

Straight line winds are especially dangerous.

The agency incurs substantial damage annually to its facilities due to straight line winds. These winds are often confused with tornadoes because of the damage and wind speeds. However, the strong gusty winds associated with straight line winds blow roughly in a straight line unlike the rotating winds of a tornado. If you were to survey the damage pattern left by straight line winds you would see debris such as uprooted trees laid out in a nearly parallel row.



Tornadoes

Texas is a prime spawning ground for tornadoes. If a tornado is spotted in your area, would you know what to do? The Risk Management Department recommends the following suggestions.



- * One rule of thumb is to **GO LOW** and **GET LOW**.
- * **Go** to the lowest level of the structure you are in.
- * If you are at home when a tornado strikes, go to the inner most part of the house on the lowest floor like a bathroom or closet with no windows. Crouch or lie down, cover and protect your head.
- * If you live in a mobile home, go outside, and lie flat in a ditch or ravine.
- * If you are in a office building, go to an interior hallway.



Tornados can pop up easily here in Texas. Would you know what to do if you were driving down the road and saw a tornado. What would you do? Would you drive faster or stop to watch?



- * Leave your car immediately.
- * If you have time, get inside a building.
- * If not, lie flat in a ditch or ravine, cover your head with your arms.
- * **Do not** take cover in your vehicle.



Tornadoes can occur any time of year in Texas, but the majority occur or happen during the spring and summer months. They can occur during the daylight or night time hours. This is why it is a good idea to keep your eyes to the sky and pay close attention to tornado watches and warnings.



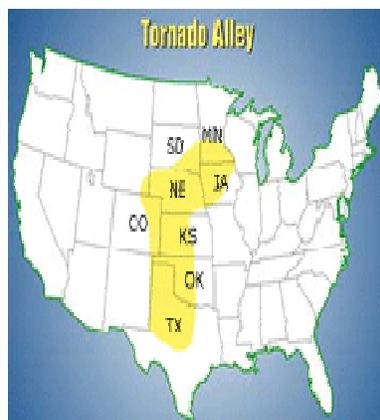
Do you know the difference between a tornado watch and tornado warning?

Tornado Watch

Tornado watch means "watch" the sky. Weather conditions are right for tornadoes to form.

Tornado Warning

Tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted or identified on radar, take cover immediately!!!!



Thunderstorms

All thunderstorms are very dangerous.

There are several associated dangers of thunderstorms including tornadoes, strong winds, hail, lightning and flash flooding. Here are some facts about thunderstorms.



- * Thunderstorms may occur singly, in clusters, or in lines.
- * Some of the most severe occur when a single thunderstorm affects one location for an extended time.
- * Thunderstorms typically produce rain for a brief period, anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour.
- * Warm, humid conditions are highly favorable for thunderstorm development.
- * About 10 percent of thunderstorms are classified as severe. These could produce hail at least three-quarters of an inch in diameter, has winds of 58 miles per hour or higher, or and could produce a tornado.



Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Tells you when and where severe thunderstorms are likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to a radio or television for additional information.



Severe Thunderstorm Warning

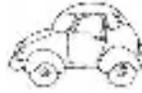
- * This warning is issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar.
- * Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm.
- * **Take cover immediately**



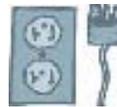
Precautions for Thunderstorms

- * Postpone outdoor activities.
- * Get inside a house, building, or a hard top automobile. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes

the car, you are much safer inside the vehicle than outside.



- * Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide **NO** protection from lightning.
- * Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- * Shutter windows, if shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- * Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- * Use a corded telephone **only** for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.
- * Unplug appliances and other electrical items (computers, air conditioners)
- * Use a battery operated radio.



With school coming to an end, it is time to start planning those summer vacations. Have a great vacation and remember to keep your eye to the sky and be prepared.



Training Circular
TDCJ Risk Management Department
Volume 09 Issue 06
June 2009

Jackie Edwards
Director, Administrative Review and Risk Management

David Scholwinski
Program Administrator
Risk Management

Jerry Bailey
Audit & Inspection Manager
Risk Management

Sherilyn Epperson
Operations Manager
Risk Management

The *Training Circular*, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Design and layout of the Training Circular is performed by Sherilyn Epperson Operations Manager, Risk Management. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome. Send Suggestions to:

Sherilyn Epperson
Risk Management Department
1060 Hwy 190 East
Huntsville, Texas 77340
or,
sherilyn.epperson@tdcj.state.tx.us

All items received become property of the Risk Management Department unless otherwise agreed and are subject to be rewritten for length and clarity. Permission is hereby granted to reprint articles, provided source is cited.