

...Severe Weather Awareness Week in New England and New York...

The National Weather Service, along with all the New England states and the state of New York, have proclaimed this week as Severe Weather Awareness Week. Today, we look at severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.

The number of days with thunderstorms across Vermont and northern New York ranges from 20 to 30 days with nearly a third of these days experiencing severe weather.

A severe thunderstorm can produce damaging winds in excess of 58 miles an hour, large hail of 1 inch in diameter or larger, or even a tornado. Heavy rain which may cause flooding and deadly lightning are also likely hazards in a severe thunderstorm.

The National Weather Service issues a severe thunderstorm watch when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms.

The National Weather Service issues a severe thunderstorm warning by county when radar indicates a severe thunderstorm or when severe weather is reported by spotters or local officials.

Tornadoes are a rare phenomena across the north country, with an average of one tornado occurrence per year. A tornado is a violent windstorm characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud.

Tornado damage is classified by the enhanced fujita scale ranging from relatively little damage (EF0) to catastrophic damage (EF5). Violent tornadoes (EF3 or greater) are capable of great destruction and loss of life. Tornadoes fill the air with lethal, wind borne debris, such objects as sticks, glass and lawn furniture become deadly missiles when driven by tornadic winds.

A tornado watch means that meteorological conditions exist for the possible formation of tornadoes in your area.

A tornado warning means a tornado has been spotted or has been indicated by radar.

When a severe thunderstorm or tornado watch has been issued, you should make preparations and be alert for approaching storms. Secure all loose objects such as lawn furniture and other yard equipment. These items may become dangerous projectiles during the storm.

Have an emergency first aid kit available, including a battery operated NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio with tone alert capabilities. It is one of the quickest and most reliable ways to receive severe weather information.

When a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning has been issued act quickly, but do not panic.

At home, go to the basement or find a windowless interior room on the lowest floor, like a closet or bathroom. Remember, mobile homes

are not considered safe indoor shelters, you should seek substantial shelter elsewhere.

In schools, hospitals, factories and shopping centers go to a predesignated shelter. If an underground shelter is not available, go to an interior small room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture. Stay away from large open rooms with windows such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.

If caught outdoors and no shelter is available, find a ditch or low spot and stay crouched low to the ground, protecting your head. Do not lie flat on the ground. If on a boat, head for safe harbor and find safe shelter immediately.

Stay informed and be alert, if threatening weather is in the area. Remember, severe thunderstorms can develop quickly giving you little time to react to the danger. If a thunderstorm approaches you, take the necessary precautions to protect yourself.

More information on severe weather as well as forecasts and other weather information can be found at www.weather.gov/burlington. Also, visit our NWS Burlington Facebook and Twitter sites for more information.