



Severe Weather Guidelines For Field Research

Plan for safety before you go into the field. Think about the work being conducted, site location, season (hot, cold, rain, snow, etc.), equipment being used, and your own physical condition and health. Check the weather forecast. Consider all of the factors, and then make sure that you have adequately planned for any weather emergency that might arise. Use the following information when planning field research that could be affected by severe weather conditions.

EXTREME HEAT

Most heat disorders occur when an individual is overexposed to heat or over-exertion based on age and physical condition.

Research programs, activities and outings should be prepared to modify programming as needed in extreme heat.

- Indoor temperature of 88 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Outdoor heat index of 105 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Guidelines when the heat index or temperatures are high:

- Check for critical updates from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Provide and encourage drinking plenty of water. Researchers and students may not feel thirsty, but they must drink water throughout the activity. Avoid drinks with caffeine.
- Locate activities where there is sufficient air circulation or provide fans for air movement.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
Avoid dark colors that absorb the sun's rays.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available.
- Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals.
- Closely monitor participants for signs of heat stress.

Additional information about extreme heat can be found at:

<http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov/SpringSummerExcessiveHeat.aspx>

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM/TORNADO WATCHES AND WARNINGS

Learn the differences between watches and warnings and have a plan in place for both. The National Weather Service (NWS) is responsible for issuing severe weather watches, warnings and advisories to alert the public when dangerous weather conditions are expected.

- **Watch** - A weather watch means there is the potential or conditions exist for a dangerous weather event.
- **Warning** - A weather warning means that a dangerous weather event is imminent. Immediate action must be taken to protect life and property.

Thunderstorm/tornado watch

- Be knowledgeable about the location and have a plan in place prior to arrival of severe weather.
- The plan should include: who will monitor weather conditions, criteria for stopping activities and / or sheltering, designated shelter locations, how to communicate with everyone.
- Communicate the plan to all researchers or students present.
- Monitor media sources and / or weather radar for updates.
- Modify outdoor activities to ensure that relatively quick access to a shelter is available.
- If severe weather arrives, stop activities and move everyone to a safe location based on the pre-determined plan.

Thunder and lightning

- Follow all precautions described above in watches. Additionally:
- If thunder is heard, lightning is close enough to strike. When thunder is heard, immediately stop activities and move to the pre-determined safe shelter area.
- A designated person should monitor sky conditions.
- Wait for at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard before resuming activities.

Severe thunderstorm warning

- Follow all precautions described above in watches. Additionally:
- Designate an adult to monitor sky conditions.
- Terminate outdoor activities and seek shelter immediately utilizing the pre-determined plan.
- Make sure a head count is completed before moving to a safe place, after arriving at the safe place and after leaving the designated area.

Additional information about thunderstorms and lightning can be found at:

http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov/Documents/pdfs/Thunderstorm_Lightning_Safety_2017.pdf

Tornado warning

- Follow all precautions above in watches and thunderstorm warnings. Additionally:
- In a home or building, move to a pre-designated shelter, such as a basement.
- If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle; instead, leave it immediately and move to a noticeably lower level of ground than the roadway, lie down and cover your head.
- Remain alert to the signs of an approaching tornado. Flying debris from tornadoes cause serious injuries or even death
- If you cannot quickly get to a shelter, get into your vehicle, buckle your seat belt, and drive to nearest shelter.
- If you cannot get to your vehicle, get to the nearest depression or ditch, kneel or lie face-down, and use your arms and hands to protect you head.

Additional information about tornado emergencies can be found at:

<http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov/TornadoFacts.aspx>