

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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Recently I was reading through a Safe Farm publication that addressed safety tips for farmers to use when severe weather occurs. Even though these pointers were directed to farmers, I believe these tips are good reminders for all of us since we are all affected by severe weather from time to time.

First and foremost, if there is a tornado warning issued, immediately take shelter. If you are on a tractor or in a vehicle in open areas, get out of the vehicle and lie down in a low area or ditch away from the tractor or vehicle. Use your arms to protect your head from flying debris. Never try to outrun a tornado as its speed and direction are unpredictable. If you are near buildings, know which ones offer the best protection. Choose one with a basement or strong inner structure. Stay away from outside walls.

Most tornadoes occur from April and June between noon and midnight but can occur anytime during the year and any time of day or night. Signs to watch for include a dark, greenish sky, large hail, a cloud that looks like a wall and a loud roar similar to a freight train.

Thunderstorms produce lightning and the potential for flash flooding. Therefore it is necessary to take steps to reduce the risk of a lightning strike or being caught in a flash flood. Most deaths from lightning happen outdoors but they can also occur inside while talking on the phone, taking a bath or shower or standing in an open doorway or near a window. Lightning often strikes out of the area of heavy rains and may occur as far away as ten miles from rainfall. "Heat lightning" after a hot summer day is from a storm too far away to hear the thunder. "Heat lightning" may indicate a storm is moving your way. Indications that a thunderstorm is near include increasing wind, flashes of lightning, sound of thunder and static on an AM radio station.

To protect yourself from a lightning strike in an open field, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles and a place not subject to flooding. If you are in the woods take shelter under the shortest trees. If there is no shelter available, make yourself the shortest target by squatting low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Minimize contact with the ground and place your hands on your knees with your head between them when your skin tingles or your hair stands on end. If you are in a tractor or vehicle during an electrical storm, stay put. Vehicles often provide better protection than lying exposed in an open field.

When a flash flood warning has been issued, avoid low-lying areas and do not drive over low-water bridges, small creeks or roads that may be soft or partially washed out. It is better to spend extra time to take other routes than be caught in swiftly moving floodwaters.

If you would like more information on protecting yourself and others during severe weather, please contact the Grundy Office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979 and ask for the Safe Farm Publication Pm-1563i.