

Guide for Families March: Severe Storms

Ka-Boom! Stay Ahead of the Storm

While a springtime shower might ruin a field trip, a severe thunderstorm can lead to a dangerous situation. Thunderstorms can produce lightning, flash floods, hail, and damaging winds. Severe storms can even spawn tornadoes, leaving behind broken tree limbs, downed power lines, and other debris. While city officials closely monitor weather in the area, severe weather can occur with little or no warning.

Guidelines for staying safe during a thunderstorm:

- The safest place during a thunderstorm is indoors. Exposed structures like bus shelters do not provide adequate protection.
- Do not use an electrical appliance that is connected to a building's electrical wiring.
- Do not use showers, sinks, or any device connected to a building's plumbing system.
- If you are in a car, do not touch any metal surfaces.
- If you are caught outdoors with no shelter, crouch down, grab your ankles, bend forward, and lower your head. Do not lay flat on the ground.
- Pay close attention to local weather forecasts and bulletins.
- Make sure your family's disaster plan and emergency supply kit are current.

Let's get ready and stay safe when storms come our way!

To Learn More:

Office of Emergency Management, http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/weather_thunder.shtml

NYC Office of Emergency Management, www.NYC.gov/oem

OEM on Facebook, www.facebook.com/NYCEmergencymanagement

OEM on Twitter, [@nycoem](https://twitter.com/nycoem)

Notify NYC, Register for emergency notifications by visiting NYC.gov/notifynyc, calling 311, or following [@NotifyNYC](https://twitter.com/NotifyNYC) on Twitter

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/thunderstorm>

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/severeweather/resources/ttl6-10.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/US.NationalWeatherService.NewYorkNY.gov>

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Quick activities to try at home:

- List outdoor spots you and your family frequently visit. Discuss the best options for taking cover during a thunderstorm in each one.
- Work in math practice by teaching your child how to determine how many miles away lightning is. Count the number of seconds between a flash of lightning and the sound of thunder. Divide that number by 5 to get an estimate of the number of miles. Remember that if you are outdoors and the time gap is less than 30 seconds (which, when divided by 5, means the lightning is 6 miles away), you should immediately take cover. If the time gap is more than 30 seconds, don't wait; move toward a protected area right away.
- The times of year when you change your clocks are also the times to update your Go Bag and emergency supplies. Make sure your emergency reference card, Go Bags, and emergency supply kit are all complete and up-to-date.

