



Storm Watch

Storms can develop at any time. Heavy rain, thunderstorms, gusty winds, or even tornadoes seem to pop out of the sky, sometimes with little warning. Your best defense includes staying informed, being prepared, and knowing what to do before the onset of a storm to make your jobsite as safe and as weatherproof as possible.

First, one of the most important things you can do at any work site is to have a way to monitor the weather at all times. There are a number of portable weather stations, weather radios, and monitors that can be set up in a central location. Many of these weather systems come with an alert mode. When severe weather is moving in, an alarm sounds to notify you. You can also stay informed via the internet by checking weatherbug.com, NOAA.gov, or weather.com or weather apps on your smart phone. All of these constantly update their weather forecasts.

A good way to prepare for storms is to conduct evacuation drills. Depending on the signal used, workers know whether to take shelter in place, move to a central location for a head count, or leave the site completely. Some companies install temporary wireless alarms around the jobsite as well as within buildings or structures. When the alarm sounds, workers—who have practiced the drill—know where to go and what to do. Weather emergency instructions should be a part of your site-specific orientation.

In preparation for weather-related events, it should become a daily practice for you to ensure that all objects that could blow off a roof or out of a storage area are properly secured. A strong gust of wind can pick up a piece of plywood, carry it off a rooftop, and land it on a pedestrian walking by or on a motor vehicle parked below. Again, always make sure that all materials, tools, and other objects are adequately secured. Don't underestimate the power of wind. It's not unheard of for steel forms to be peeled back during severe storms.

Sudden storms can also cause environmental hazards. An unsecured fuel container can overturn or be punctured. Take time to review your storage policies and containment requirements. You don't want to be responsible for a major environmental event because you failed to address a hazard and found yourself unprepared for bad weather.

Also, make sure you have a plan in place to keep your family safe in case of a storm. Spend time reviewing safe places to go, ensuring you have enough food and water for 72 hours, and discussing how to keep in contact if you get separated. Don't depend upon cell phones as your only means of communication. If you lose power, you may not be able to recharge your phone. Always have a backup plan.



SAFETY REMINDER

Plan your drills around the Emergency Warning System tests. The local outdoor warning sirens are tested monthly, weather permitting, on the first Monday of the month at 11:00 a.m. FEMA schedules nationwide tests as well, usually annually.
Names of