



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2006

Red Cross Offers Information on Tornado/Severe Weather Preparedness

Because it is expected that our area will be hit by severe weather again in the coming days, the American Red Cross offers the following information to help individuals and businesses plan ahead and respond safely and calmly in the event of severe weather.

Opportunities and resources exist for businesses in our community to better prepare for severe storms and tornadoes. Attend the next meeting of the Business Emergency Planning Alliance (BEPA) Thursday, April 13, 2006 to learn more about preparing your business and protecting employees in the event of a tornado. Chris Miller, National Weather Service, will present. Continental Breakfast/ Networking is from 8:00am-8:30am and the seminar runs from 8:30am-9:30am. Cost to attend is free for BEPA members and \$10 per person for non-members. Please register by contacting Jennifer Ellington (217)522-3357 x 235 or jellington@il-redcross.org.

Thunderstorm Safety Tips

Before Lightning Strikes

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- Listen to a weather radio, commercial radio, or television for the latest weather forecasts.

When a Storm Approaches

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. (Leaving electric lights on, however, does not increase the chances of your home being struck by lightning.)
- Avoid taking a bath or shower, or running water for any other purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor.
- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

Flood Safety Tips

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing:

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)
- Identify where you could go if told to evacuate- choose several places.

Tornado Safety Tips

Prepare a Home Tornado Plan

- Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if there is no basement, a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep this place uncluttered.
- If you are in a high-rise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing:

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)

For more information on severe weather preparedness, contact the American Red Cross Illinois Capital Area Chapter at (217) 522-3357.