

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire and Life Safety Tips

May 2009



SEVERE WEATHER

If you don't like the weather, just wait - it'll change. This is especially true in the spring when wild changes of weather and inaccurate forecasts are commonplace occurrences. Springtime storms can damage and/or destroy homes and neighborhoods. Proper planning can lessen the effect they can have on you.



Heed the Warning Signs

Before planning outdoor activities, check to see if a storm watch or warning has been issued for the area. If you are already outside and hear thunder or see lightning, it would be best to postpone any further outdoor activities until 30 minutes after you last hear thunder or see lightning. Click on *Lightning Safety PSA* for more information on lightning.

Tornados can happen year-round but most happen in April, May and June. It is said they sound like a roaring train. They can develop very quickly, sometimes before an official warning can be issued. If you see, hear or find out a **tornado warning** has been issued, take shelter immediately! Go to the most interior room on the lowest floor that doesn't have windows (such as a bathroom or closet). If you are inside a mobile home, leave immediately and go to the designated storm shelter in your park or the nearest safe structure such as a school or other sturdy building. No, trying to outrun a tornado in a car is not a good idea. They can change directions very quickly. Take shelter in a safe building or a ditch.

Question



Do you have a battery powered radio with fresh batteries? The local emergency stations for the Detroit area are WWJ Newsradio AM 950 and News/Talk WJR 760 AM.



After the Storm

Be very, very cautious. High winds and falling trees may bring down power lines. These may be carrying thousands of volts. If you see a downed line, move away and keep everyone at least 10' away. If you are in your car and it is in contact with a downed line, stay inside. Keep other away. It is false that power lines can be safely moved by using a rope, cloth or stick. Even lines that seem "dead" are dangerous. This is a job for the professionals. It simple isn't worth losing your life.

Some people prepare for unexpected power outages by having a portable generator. They do a good job of providing a power source. Keep in mind that they can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly. Do not operate in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces – even for a little while. Follow the manufacturers' safety warnings.

There may be broken glass or a structure may have become unsound. If a structure has been badly damaged, do not enter. Your presence may be all it needs to collapse.

Storms sometimes damage gas lines. If you smell gas or hear a hissing noise, quickly leave your home and leave the door open. This is another time when it may be best to let the professionals handle the situation.



Neighbors being Neighborly

After a storm, check in on your neighbors – especially older adults and those with mobility challenges. Make plans *before* a tragedy occurs to find out the special skills and needs of your neighbors so you will know what is needed and how you can work together in an emergency situation.

References

AARP, *Spring Storm Safety*

Chisholm, Mark, *Trees and Storms: A Recipe of Hazards*

Macomb County Office of Emergency Management, *Community Emergency Preparedness Workbook & Guidelines*

Macomb Township Broadcast Media, *Lightning Safety PSA*

Macomb Township Fire Department, *Fire and Life Safety Initiative*

Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, *Michigan Family Preparedness Guide Wheel*

Southern Power District, *Storm Safety Tips*

U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – National Weather Service, *Thunderstorms...Tornadoes... Lightning... Nature's Most Violent Storms*