

May 2014

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Severe Weather Spring

The severe weather that has plagued areas of the country from Michigan to Florida this spring has reached a death toll of 36 and unfortunately, that number will likely rise. It is estimated that 79 tornadoes have occurred from Nebraska to North Carolina. In addition to these destructive storms, flash flooding has occurred all along the Gulf Coast and heavy rains in the east triggered a landslide in Baltimore, Maryland. Here in Ada County, extreme weather is considered one of the greatest potential causes of a natural disaster. The first week of May is recognized as Severe Weather Week in the northwest. Each day the National Weather Service will share information on a different subject related to this topic. Below is the link to this material:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/seasonal/severeAwareness/2014/>



Tornadoes In Idaho?

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), Idaho, Oregon and Washington have tornadoes every year. The activity varies from year to year, but outbreaks do occur. In February of 2000, five tornadoes struck the Snake River Plain while on a single day in October of 2006 there were six tornadoes in the Magic Valley. On average Oregon and Washington have 2-3 per year and Idaho has 3-4 per year. The tornadoes of this area are less intense than those that occur east of the Rockies and usually last only a few minutes. The tornado strengths range between EF 0 - EF 2. They can occur anytime of the year, however most develop in spring or fall. Virtually all of them have formed during the heat of day between the hours of 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm. There are no reported fatalities from any of the events in Idaho and the greatest number of injuries from any single event was three in June of 1987 during a tornado in Shoshone County. The most recent tornado in Ada County occurred in August of 2000. It was rated as an EF 0 and stayed over open fields south of the airport.

How Are Tornadoes Rated?

In 1971, Dr. T. Theodore Fujita developed a damage scale for winds that included tornadoes. Its purpose was to relate damages to the intensity of the wind. Overtime it was found that the scale was subject to interpretation and changes were made that resulted in the Enhanced F - scale that has been in use since February of 2007. The EF Scale takes into account building material and type of construction as it relates to the amount of damage sustained. The three second gust speeds are estimates, not actual measurements, like those taken at a weather station. All tornadoes can cause damage and injure people, but a tornado is considered to be "signifigant" at EF 2 and beyond. For more detailed information on tornado formation, ratings and forecasts go to:

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/index.html>

EF SCALE	
EF Number	3 second Gust (mph)
0	65 - 85
1	86 - 110
2	111 -135
3	136 - 165
4	166 - 200
5	Over 200

Severe Storms

The spring and summer months can bring a variety of severe weather threats to Ada County. Damaging wind, large hail and flash flooding are always possible during a severe thunderstorm. Portions of Ada County experienced all of these during one event as recently as Sept. 5th, 2013. Severe thunderstorms are defined by the National Weather Service (NWS) as having winds in excess of 58 miles per hour and/or hail one inch in diameter or greater. Ada County has one or two severe thunderstorms each year on average. In August of 2010, 70 people were treated for injuries when winds in excess of 65 mph blew through the Western Idaho Fair; the storm blew over tents, ticket booths and sent large amounts of debris through the air. Severe weather is a fact of life here. This week learn more about it and be better prepared for what the weather may bring. For more information on weather preparedness go to: [ACEM/Weather Preparedness](#)



Ada County Emergency Management
7200 Barrister Drive ◆ Boise, ID. 83704 ◆ (208) 577-4750 ◆ FAX (208) 577-4759
HOME PAGE: www.accem.org ◆ E-MAIL: pmarusich@adaweb.net

