

## ***MARCH IS SEVERE WEATHER MONTH FOR LAKE TANGLEWOOD***

### **TORNADO SAFETY FOR TEXANS**

AUSTIN – Tornadoes can occur at any time of year in Texas, but they happen most often in spring and summer. Storms are most likely to strike in the late afternoon and early evening hours. Spokesmen for the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management urge Texans to monitor TV and radio broadcasts for storm information, as well as NOAA weather radio.

A *TORNADO WATCH* is issued when severe weather is expected along with large or multiple tornadoes. It means *WATCH* the sky.

A *TORNADO WARNING* means *TAKE ACTION* because a tornado is on the ground. Seek shelter immediately. A tornado warning usually covers one county or a portion of a county and generally lasts for an hour or less. When a tornado is sighted, the most important rule is to ***get low and stay low***.

- Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor of the home, such as a bathroom, closet or room without windows.
- In an office building, go to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- Leave your mobile home and take shelter in a nearby building. If no building is nearby, lie flat in a ditch or ravine.
- Never stay inside a car. Leave the car and lie flat in a ditch or a ravine. If a building is nearby, take shelter inside. Never try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- At school, follow plans and go to a designated shelter area, usually interior hallways on the lowest floor. Avoid auditoriums, gyms and areas with wide, freespan roofs.
- Go to the interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor of a shopping center. Do not leave the shopping center to get in your car.
- If you are in open country, take cover on low, protected ground.
- Avoid areas near exterior glass or doors, areas along exterior walls, or rooms with wide expanse roofs – such as auditoriums, cafeterias and gyms.

## **HAIL AND STRAIGHT LINE WINDS**

AUSTIN – Thousands of thunderstorms strike Texas every year, many of them severe. A severe thunderstorm is defined as a storm that produces winds of at least 58 mph, hail three-fourths of an inch in diameter or a tornado.

While tornadoes are extremely dangerous, wind and hail storms can do similar damage, so thunderstorms should never be taken for granted. Dangers include:

- Straight line winds, or winds in excess of 100 mph, strong enough to uproot trees and cause substantial damage to buildings.
- Downburst winds – severe and rapid downdrafts of air that push damaging winds outward on or near ground level, especially dangerous to aviation.
- Hail falling to earth at speeds nearing 100 mph, damaging trees, crops, automobiles and buildings. Hail storms cause more than \$1 billion in damage nationwide each year.

As with other severe weather threats, the key is to monitor TV and radio broadcasts as well as NOAA weather radio for storm warnings and watches.

When straight line winds threaten, respond the same way you would to the threat of a tornado. Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom or closet. Stay away from windows. If you are outside, cover your head to protect against flying debris.

If you encounter hail while driving, turn around. You may be driving into the core of a thunderstorm where tornadoes form.