

SEVERE WEATHER

The weather in North Texas can be brutal and is among one of the biggest risks we face at UNT. With this in mind, we want to make sure you fully understand the weather risks we face. Severe weather hazards most common in North Central Texas include the following:

- Tornadoes
- Severe Thunderstorms
- High Winds
- Flooding
- Lightning

TORNADOES

A tornado is a rapidly rotating column of air that is connected to a cloud and contacting the ground. Tornadoes can be incredibly destructive, with wind speeds more than 200 mph possible. Tornadoes are generally associated with the spring months, but tornadoes can also happen any time of year in North Central Texas.

TORNADO WATCH

A tornado watch means conditions are favorable for tornadoes to form. If the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Watch, remain alert and monitor the weather in the event of announcements.

TORNADO WARNING

A Tornado Warning means a tornado has been sighted or radar indicates rotation in the clouds. If the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Warning for Denton County, take the following actions:

1. Proceed to your designated shelter area (which should be an interior room without windows on the lowest level of the building) informing all individuals along your route to take shelter in a designated shelter location.
2. Move away from windows, doors, and exterior walls.
3. Get under a piece of furniture, if safely possible.
4. Monitor the National Weather Service website and social media to determine when the warning has ended.
5. Do not leave your shelter until you receive an Eagle Alert, or an alternative alert explaining that the warning has ended.

If you are in a car or outdoors during a Tornado Warning and cannot get to a building, cover your head, and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible. Do **NOT** try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.

After a Tornado Warning, check those around you and your area of the building for injured persons. Call **911** if there are injuries or significant damage. If you smell natural gas, open the windows, and exit the building; call **911** once you are safely away from the building. Refer to the Gas Leak guideline.

Evacuate damaged buildings and do not re-enter unless the building has been officially declared safe. Comply with instructions from first responders.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM

Severe thunderstorms - producing high winds, flash flooding, and hail - can be just as dangerous and deadly as tornadoes. All thunderstorms have the potential to produce strong winds, excessive lightning, and hail of various sizes.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH

A Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued when environmental conditions are right to produce severe thunderstorms in and around the watch area. This does not guarantee that severe thunderstorms will form, but individuals within the watch area should take action to ensure they are prepared for storms. This may include creating contingency plans for outdoor events or ensuring all individuals in your workplace or residence hall understand the dangers of severe thunderstorms.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING

A Severe Thunderstorm Warning means a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by radar. A thunderstorm may be defined as "severe" if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It contains winds of 58 mph or faster.
- It contains hail that is 1-inch diameter or larger.

When the National Weather Service issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning:

- Get indoors and away from windows.
- Do NOT go outside to move your vehicle or perform any other outdoor activity as the storm is likely to produce excessive lightning and damaging hail.
- Monitor the weather closely, as the storm could escalate and produce a tornado or other weather hazard(s).
- If your building has sheltering locations that are normally locked, make sure they are unlocked.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio, local news stations, radio stations, or weather-related social media pages for updates on weather conditions.

HIGH WIND

High winds are common in North Texas. High Wind Warnings are issued by the National Weather Service if winds are sustained at 40 mph or are gusting up to 58 mph. Wind advisories are issued during strong winds that may not have reached the threshold required to issue a High Wind Warning. High winds can reach tornado force, causing severe damage to homes and property. Though windy conditions may be common in North Texas, watches, advisories, and warnings should be taken seriously.

HIGH WIND WATCH

If a **High Wind Watch** has been issued, move or secure your vehicle, bicycle, or loose outdoor items, if safely possible before the wind (**DO NOT** try to move these objects during a high wind event).

WIND ADVISORY OR HIGH WIND WARNING

If a **Wind Advisory** or **High Wind Warning** has been issued for UNT, alert those in your area of the Advisory/Warning. Take shelter indoors, away from windows in an interior room or basement if the winds reach damaging levels.

If you are caught outside or driving during severe wind, shelter in your car. Drive your car to a sturdy building, if safely possible. Try to park your car somewhere where it is less likely that it will be hit by falling trees or power lines.

While driving in high winds:

- Hold the steering wheel with both hands – high winds can cause your vehicle to drift.
- Keep a distance from large vehicles such as trucks, buses, or vehicles pulling trailers – high winds can blow these vehicles over.

FLOODING

Flooding and flash flooding are incredibly dangerous. According to FEMA, just six inches of water can sweep a person off their feet; just a foot and a half can cause a vehicle to lose control and stall. Remember to **NEVER** walk or drive through rushing water. Water moving at 25 mph, has the pressure equivalent of wind blowing at 790 miles per an hour, according to experts from The Weather Channel.

In the case of flooding, get to high ground and stay off the roads or other flooded areas. Avoid the following objects and activities:

- Downed power lines or electrical wires—water conducts electrical current and can cause electrocution; always assume downed power lines are “live”.
- Floating, boating, swimming, rowing, or other water activities.

LIGHTNING

No area outside is completely safe from lightning. In the event of lightning, take shelter indoors immediately. Remember, if you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike: “***When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors.***” Stay indoors until **30** minutes after you last heard thunder. **Lightning is a hazard with ALL storms.**

When indoors during lightning, follow these safety precautions:

- Stay off corded phones, computers, or other electrical equipment.
- Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths, and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Stay inside and off porches and balconies.
- **DO NOT** lie or lean against concrete walls or floors.

If you are caught outside during lightning, follow these safety tips:

- Get down from elevated areas (hills, ridges, etc.).
- **DO NOT** lie flat on the ground.
- **DO NOT** seek shelter under a tree.
- **DO NOT** take shelter under a cliff or rocky overhang.
- Get out of bodies of water (ponds, lakes, etc.).
- Get away from bodies of water.
- Avoid objects that conduct electricity (wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.).

If your office or department has an outdoor event during a storm, move the event indoors or delay the event until 30 minutes after the last heard thunder.