

This fact sheet addresses severe weather planning for the protection of employees, volunteers, missionaries, and patrons taking part in Church-sponsored outdoor special events, including pageants, sporting events, and so on.

1. **Site-Specific Plan.** A written, site-specific plan should be prepared for every special event and should include such details as anticipated attendance numbers, typical weather patterns and risks for the time of year, locations of safe structures, evacuation plans, and the names, telephone numbers, job titles, roles, and responsibilities of the key people over the event. Those who interface directly with the public should be trained on how to carry out the plan to avoid panic and confusion in case of a severe weather emergency. Call the Risk Management Division for a sample plan.
2. **Chain of Command.** Those with primary responsibilities for the event must agree on a chain of command and should identify (1) who will monitor threatening weather, (2) who will make the decision to postpone or cancel the event, and (3) how that decision will be communicated to all participants and patrons. These details should be included in the site-specific plan. Communication, coordination, and cooperation are essential.
3. **Weather Monitoring.** The weather should be monitored daily before the event, two hours before the event, and regularly during the event. If there is a threat of severe weather, use multiple sources such as the following to verify the threat:
 - The Storm Prediction Center on the Internet at www.spc.noaa.gov
 - NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Weather Radio broadcasts
 - An on-site weather or lightning monitoring system
 - One or more local AM or FM radio stations
 - One or more local television stations
4. **Warning Status.** The following warning levels are used in weather monitoring:
 - **All Clear.** No threatening weather is approaching.
 - **Severe Weather Watch.** Conditions are favorable for severe weather in and close to the watch area. Severe weather includes high winds, hail, tornadoes, thunderstorms with lightning, and so on. Watches cover large areas of one or more states and are usually in effect for several hours.
 - **Severe Weather Warning.** Severe weather has been reported in the area or is approaching. Warnings are issued for individual counties or parts of counties and are generally in effect for approximately one hour. The event should be postponed or canceled when this level of warning is in effect. If postponed, the event should not resume until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder is heard or until the National Weather Service has removed or canceled the warning for the area.
5. **Evacuation.** During a **warning**, everyone should be evacuated from elevated locations and open areas. Participants and patrons should be evacuated to a predetermined safe structure or location.
 - In case of lightning, any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, such as a building with plumbing or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure, should be the first choice for evacuation.

- If a tornado has been spotted, evacuation should be to a predesignated underground shelter. If an underground shelter is not available, evacuate to small interior rooms or hallways on the lowest floor, and instruct participants and patrons to get under sturdy pieces of furniture near the center of the rooms and stay away from windows.
- In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, vehicles with a hard metal roof (not convertibles or golf carts) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. However, if a tornado has been spotted, participants and patrons should not take refuge in vehicles. If a building is unavailable or there is no time, people should get out of vehicles and lie in ditches or low-lying areas away from vehicles.