



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## **MDHHS offers tips, resources to stay safe during severe weather**

*Recent tornadoes in southwest Michigan and last year's ice storm  
in northern Michigan illustrate importance of preparedness*

LANSING, Mich. – In recognition of Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 15-21, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is sharing resources to help Michigan residents prepare for severe weather, including making a personal [emergency plan](#).

“As we enter severe weather season, it’s important for every Michigander to prepare,” said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. “The importance of severe weather awareness is clearer than ever following last week’s deadly tornadoes. I encourage every Michigander to take time now to make a plan, build an emergency kit, and sign up for local emergency alerts. Preparing today can save lives when minutes matter. Let’s work together and stay safe.”

“Household emergency plans are critical to family safety, particularly because severe weather can strike without warning,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. “Families may not be in the same place when a severe weather event occurs, so it is important to create a plan for all of your loved ones to stay in touch and know what to do and where to go to stay safe.”

Severe weather conditions can occur during any season and pose threats to public health. A series of tornadoes in southwest Michigan Friday, March 6, caused widespread power outages, devastating property damage and at least four deaths. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency for Branch, Cass and St. Joseph Counties to assist with response and recovery efforts.

In late March 2025, residents living in northern Michigan and the eastern Upper Peninsula experienced a severe ice storm that left at least 90,000 homes without power. The storm, [declared a major disaster by the federal government](#), made travel difficult and left many stranded in their homes for multiple days without electricity.

Residents were faced with many challenges, including:

- Loss of heat and running water (if relying on a well).
- Hazardous travel conditions and impassable roads.

- Loss of phone and cellular service.
- Loss of food and medicines that require refrigeration.
- Inability to keep electricity-powered medical devices running.
- Frigid temperatures and inability to heat homes.

State and local agencies have information that can help residents plan for weather-related emergencies based on their specific needs. Some resources include:

- The MDHHS [Michigan Prepares website](#) shares a variety of preparedness resources, including guidance on [How to Create Your Emergency Plan](#).
- MDHHS has resources that can help residents avoid [carbon monoxide poisoning](#) if they use [generators during power outages](#).
- The [Flood Safety Series](#) provides practical guidance for:
  - [Preparing for floods](#).
  - [Staying safe during a flood](#).
  - [Staying safe after a flood](#).
- [Michigan State Police's MIREADY webpage](#) contains emergency planning information, including [Pet Preparedness](#).
- The [Michigan Public Service Commission](#) serves the public by ensuring safe, reliable and accessible energy. If a resident has experienced lengthy or frequent power outages, they may qualify for an [outage credit](#).
- The Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's fact sheet, [Protecting Your Private Water Supply in an Emergency](#), is a resource for well owners and reviews the potential hazards associated with power outages and flooding.

Residents can also stay informed by [signing up for emergency alerts](#) from their county or city. Some [local health departments](#) also have emergency planning information that may be more relevant to county-specific concerns.

Additionally, a voluntary statewide [tornado drill](#) is being held at 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 18.

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