



March Is Severe Weather Preparedness Month

by Alicia Tate-Nadeau
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SPRINGFIELD - Illinois averages 53 tornadoes per year, which means you should grab your dog Toto and be prepared for tornadoes and severe weather. March is Severe Weather Preparedness Month and a good time to plan ahead, especially with the severe weather here in Illinois.

“From heavy snowfall to dangerous winds, everyone in Illinois should be prepared for adverse conditions,” said **Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau**. “Last week, Illinois saw multiple tornadoes throughout the state,

followed by unseasonably warm temperatures, and now we're getting ready for snow and potential flooding."

Illinois ranks fourth in the United States for the most tornadoes per square mile.

Communities across the state are also susceptible to flooding as it is the most common natural hazard in the U.S. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), just 1 inch of water can cause \$25,000 of damage in your home.

Severe weather preparedness includes gathering information and supplies to prepare for a loss of electricity or if you must, evacuate from your neighborhood. That's why IEMA offers a [Family Communications Plan](#) to help people map locations to meet and track important contact information.

IEMA also recommends that you:

- Keep all important records and documents in a secure waterproof container
- Make an inventory of possessions using lists and photos/videos
- Insure your property and possessions
- Know how to shut off electricity, gas, and water
- Compile an emergency kit and "go bag" to help your family for at least three days during extended power outages or evacuations
- In case power is out, make sure flashlights with fresh batteries are ready
- Generators should only be run outside, never indoors or in enclosed spaces

A good resource for planning can be downloaded for free at: www2.illinois.gov/ready/plan/Pages/FamilyPlan.aspx.

Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA): www.Ready.Illinois.gov.