

Information Zone

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- Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management
- Arizona Emergency Information Network
- National Weather Service Phoenix



Maricopa County

Emergency Management

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Publication made possible by a grant from The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, Title III Funds under 2009 Forestry Fees with the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2017

ARE YOU READY? DAMAGING WINDS



Preparedness Starts with You!



Maricopa County
Emergency Management

Unlike other parts of the country, thunderstorm wind gusts here in the Southwest almost always exceed 40 mph. The strongest wind gusts can exceed 100 mph, and can produce damage similar to a tornado!

STRAIGHT-LINE WIND is any thunderstorm wind that is not associated with rotation. Straight-line winds can travel dozens of miles away from the thunderstorm that produced them.

A DOWNBURST is a strong downdraft resulting in an outward burst of damaging straight-line winds on or near the ground, sometimes producing damage similar to a strong tornado.

TORNADOES do occur in Arizona. Unfortunately, many of them here are not detectable by radar because they are either too small, hidden by interfering mountains, or develop from the ground up. While they do not last long, they can occur with little or no warning, and can do considerable damage.

Watches & Warnings

Watches = Be Aware.

Warnings = Take Action!

Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Conditions are favorable for widespread thunderstorms with damaging winds and even large hail to develop. These are usually issued only when an especially active day is expected. Watch weather reports and conditions closely.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

A thunderstorm with damaging winds of 60 mph or greater is imminent, or is already underway. These winds could also produce a dust storm with visibilities below 1/4 mile. Hail 1" in diameter or larger is also possible.

Tornado Warning

A tornado has been sighted and is still on the ground, or is about to develop based on radar information. Take cover now!

Before

Know Your Risk & Be Informed

- During strong thunderstorms, straight-line winds can affect large areas and can cause dust storms.
- Downbursts (also called microbursts) can cause significant damage, downing power poles and trees.
- Drivers of high-profile vehicles should be especially aware of changing weather conditions and travel at reduced speeds.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

Prepare Yourself & Your Family

- Develop and practice a **Disaster Plan** with your family to prepare for what to do, where to go, and how to communicate during any disaster.
- Prepare to evacuate by creating a **Go Bag** for each individual and pet. Consider including one in your vehicle and one at work.
- Prepare to stay in your home for up to 3 days (without electricity or running water) by creating an **Emergency Kit**.
- Visit ready.maricopa.gov and ein.az.gov to learn more about how to prepare for disasters.

Prepare Your Home

- Secure any outdoor items including furniture and loose gutters.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Trim tree branches away from your home. Ask the power company to clear branches from power lines.

Be Informed. Be Ready. Take Action.

Before & During Any Disaster or Large-Scale Emergency

- Monitor your television, portable radio, or cell phone for information and instructions.
- If you have been told to EVACUATE or SHELTER in your home, DO SO IMMEDIATELY. Secure your home. Remember your pets. Check on neighbors who may need special assistance. Follow all evacuation or shelter orders given by local authorities.
- Return home only when authorities say it's safe.

REPORT

If you see a downed power line, **call 911**, then call the utility company:

APS 855-688-2437

SRP 602-236-8811

Other: _____

During

Take Action Indoors

- Immediately go inside a sturdy building into an interior room.
- If you are in a mobile home, move to a sturdy building before the winds pick up or the storm system reaches your location.
- Bring pets indoors.

Take Action Outdoors

- If the wind suddenly shifts and blows toward you from an approaching storm, while the temperature either becomes much colder or much hotter, the winds are likely to become even stronger. Move indoors!
- If no shelter is available avoid trees, power lines, and the side of the road. Try to find a place that will block blowing or falling debris.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from downed power lines. The ground may be electrified.

Take Action in a Vehicle

- Find and drive to a sturdy building. Hold the steering wheel with both hands and slow down.
- If you are not near a sturdy building, take shelter in your car. Move your car to a location where it is less likely to be hit by falling trees or power lines.
- Keep a distance from high profile vehicles such as trucks, buses and vehicles towing trailers. One strong gust of wind can be enough to flip one of these trailers onto its side.

After

Stay Safe, Healthy & Alert

- Drive with caution. Anticipate traffic light outages and obstacles in the road. Report broken utility lines and damaged roadways/railways to appropriate authorities as soon as possible.
- Be careful when handling debris that may have blown into your yard.
- Stay away from wind-damaged areas.
- If your home or property is damaged, take photos/videos of damage, list all damaged items, and contact your insurance agent to discuss claims.