

Information Zone

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



Maricopa County

Emergency Management

5630 E. McDowell Road
Phoenix, AZ 85008
602-273-1411
ready.maricopa.gov

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2017

ARE YOU READY?

DUST STORMS

Preparedness Starts with You!



Maricopa County
Emergency Management

DUST STORMS

are unexpected, unpredictable, and can sweep across desert landscapes at any time.

Thunderstorms frequently produce downbursts, straight line winds, and tornadoes. All three of these wind types can create dust storms or "haboobs".

Dust storms often come with no warning and can significantly reduce visibility, resulting in deadly multi-vehicle accidents on roadways.

During an average year, generally one to three dust storms will move into the Phoenix area. Dust storms usually last a few minutes to an hour. You can endure these brief but powerful windstorms if you know how to react.

Watches & Warnings

Watches = Be Aware.

Warnings = Take Action!

Dust Storm Watch

Tells you when and where dust storms are likely to occur.

Dust Storm Warning

Issued when visibility is 1/2 mile or less due to blowing dust and wind speeds of 30 mph or more.

Before

Know Your Risk & Be Informed

- Dust storms are more common near agricultural areas.
- Dust storms are more frequent in July and August and between 4:00p.m. and 6:00p.m.
- Drivers of high-profile vehicles should be especially aware of changing weather conditions and travel at reduced speeds.

Prepare Yourself & Your Family

- Develop and practice a **Disaster Plan** with your family to prepare for what to do, where to go, how to find each other, 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.

During

Take Action in a Vehicle

- Do not drive into or through a dust storm. **PULL ASIDE. STAY ALIVE.**
- Do not wait until there is low visibility to take action. Immediately check traffic around you and slowly and safely pull over as far as you can, completely off the paved portion of the roadway. Do not stop in a travel lane or the emergency lane. Completely exit the highway if possible.
- Turn off all of your lights, including emergency lights. Put the car in park and set the emergency brake. Take your foot off of the brake pedal. Other motorists may tend to follow taillights in an attempt to get through the dust storm, and may strike your vehicle from behind.
- Stay in the vehicle with your seatbelt buckled and wait for the storm to pass.
- If you absolutely cannot pull off of the roadway, proceed at a speed suitable for visibility. Use painted lines as a guide. Turn on lights and occasionally sound the horn until you can safely pull off of the roadway.

Take Action Indoors

- Close your doors and windows.
- Consider turning off air-conditioning/heating system until the dust storm passes.
- Bring pets indoors

Take Action Outdoors

- Get as low to the ground as possible far away from roads and freeways.
- Dust Storms often accompany severe winds and thunderstorms which could lead to flash flooding. Avoid trees and low lying areas.
- Protect your face and any exposed skin. Cover your nose and mouth.

After

Stay Safe, Healthy & Alert

- If you are pulled over in a vehicle, check traffic and carefully return to the roadway.
- 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.