

## News Release

For Immediate Release

May 13, 2024

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### Be Prepared for Severe Weather

Considering the recent severe weather that has plagued the Midwest in the past few weeks, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage residents to refresh their knowledge in preparedness for severe weather. Tornadoes are usually associated with severe thunderstorms; however, tornadoes can happen at other times as well.

“Knowledge of preparedness is crucial for dealing with severe weather,” states Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “The risk of damage to life and property can be catastrophic, but being prepared ahead of time can lower the risk of injuries and reduce stress.”

When preparing for severe weather, including tornadoes, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Know your area’s risk level.** The Midwest and the Southeast in the United States have a greater risk for tornadoes than other areas of the country.
- **Use community warning systems.** Become familiar with the warning systems within your community. Sign up with your local county’s Emergency Management alert system.
- **Follow weather reports.** Make sure you pay attention to early warnings and alerts from weather prediction systems. Know the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning.
- **Be able to spot the signs.** Often signs of a tornado will include rotating, funnel-shaped clouds, clouds of debris at ground level, or a loud roar.
- **Have safe shelters.** Identify and plan routes to shelter in your home and your community. Find a safe room in the basement or a small interior windowless room on the lowest level of a building.
- **Plan for your pets.** Plan for your pet to safely shelter with you and include animal supplies when packing emergency kits.

If you would like more information on how to be safe during severe weather, please visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram, visit [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov), or stop by the office at 404 West 10th Street in McCook or 418 North Spruce St in Ogallala.

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