

4.19 Tornados/Storms

Scope- Our area is prone to heavy thunderstorms and/or tornados. In any emergency, this Department must have a basic plan of attack to preserve or lessen the effect of the storm on life and property. Storm periods can be divided into three basic phases: storm preparations, storm period, and post storm period. It is essential that Department members understand terminology used by the National Weather Service. Watches indicate the weather conditions are conducive for the formation of storms and the public should expect bad weather. Warnings indicate that a storm is in progress and that persons should take immediate cover.

Storm Preparation- While under the storm watch, members should expect threatening weather. Members' families should be prepared for threatening weather. Station should be prepared to respond for emergencies associated with storms. Specialized equipment such as emergency or standby generators should be inspected tested and operationally ready.

Storm Period- During any storm, members must care for and provide shelters for their family. This should be done prior to the storm period as there is always requests for the Fire Department for assistance.

Post Storm Period- Equipment shall be placed back in service as soon as possible. Damaged or broken equipment must be reported to the appropriate company officer. A report of damage shall be prepared and submitted to the Fire Chief indicating the damage and any loss that occurred.

Tornado- Requests for the Fire Department after a tornado presents a unique challenge. Buildings may be partially damaged or destroyed creating a collapse hazard. The first priority for buildings, structures, or vehicles that have been struck will be to conduct a search for victims. A minimum number of fire fighters shall be used to conduct searches. Any persons found should be removed from the building if possible and if their injuries permit them to be moved. Persons may have to be treated where they are found. Department officers must also be aware that ambulances may not be available due to their demand elsewhere in the community, or they may have been hit by the tornado and disabled. An Incident Command Post shall be established at the Station to control resources.

Utility Control- All utilities must be controlled as soon as possible to prevent an unwanted escalation of the situation. Natural gas must be shut off at the meter or in the street as broken gas lines in the building can cause an accumulation of gas in pockets or areas. Electricity must be controlled to prevent electrical equipment from arcing and introducing ignition sources into the building causing fires. Water must be shut off as accumulation of water in lower areas or on floors can drown trapped occupants or contribute to collapse of the building killing all occupants and rescue personnel. Once utilities have been controlled, this must be communicated to command.

Rescue- The rescue of endangered occupants will be of the utmost concern. Rescues in heavily damaged or partially collapsed structures will require careful consideration. Shoring equipment, lifting equipment, or even heavy equipment may be required to facilitate rescue. The

rescue should be carried out, if possible, with medical personnel present to care for trapped victims. Rescue methods used will vary with the situation, however, they will be carried out with the safety of the fire fighter in mind and so as not to compromise the safety of any endangered occupants.

Securement- All buildings shall be secured after they have been searched. Buildings shall be marked or identified that they have been searched so as not to waste time and equipment researching buildings.

Fires- Fires as a result of storms shall be combated as outlined by our emergency procedures for that occupancy.