

SEVERE WEATHER FACT SHEET

Tornadoes

- In an average year, tornadoes cause 70 fatalities and 1,500 injuries nationwide.
- Tornadoes occur in many parts of the world, but are found most frequently in the U.S.
- Tornadoes can produce winds in excess of 250 mph.
- Tornadoes can be more than a mile wide and stay on the ground for more than 50 miles.
- Waterspouts are tornadoes which form over warm water. They can move on shore and cause damage to coastal areas.
- Tornadoes can occur any time of the year, and are most likely to occur between 3 and 9 p.m., but can happen at any time.

Lightning

- Lightning causes an average of 60 fatalities and 300 injuries each year.
- There are 1,800 thunderstorms in progress at any given time on Earth.
- Lightning has been known to strike 10 miles from the storm in an area of clear sky above.
- Lightning strikes 30 million points on the ground in a given year in the U.S.

Flash Flooding

- Flooding causes more damage in the U.S. than any other severe weather related event; an average of \$5.3 billion per year from 1975-2004. During this period, an average of 94 people per year lost their lives due to flooding.
- 3/4 of all presidential disaster declarations are associated with flooding.
- Flash flooding is the #1 cause of death associated with thunderstorms.
- Flash flooding results in property damage in excess of 2 billion dollars each year.
- Flooding can occur in any of the 50 states or U.S. territories any time of the year.
- Most flash flood fatalities occur at night and most victims are people who become trapped in automobiles.
- Flash floods can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and scour out new channels.

Straight Line Winds

- Straight line winds are responsible for most thunderstorm wind damage.
- Winds can exceed 100 mph.
- One type of straight-line wind, the downburst, is a small area of rapidly descending air beneath a thunderstorm.
- A downburst can cause damage equivalent to a strong tornado and can be extremely dangerous to aviation.

Hail

- Hail causes more than \$1 billion in damage to property and crops each year.
- Large stones can fall at speeds faster than 100mph.

Hurricanes

- Hurricane damage is mostly due to incredibly strong and persistent winds.
- Hurricanes can produce winds exceeding 155 mph as well as tornadoes and microbursts, as well as flying debris.
- Storm surge occurs with walls of water sometimes up to 25 feet, especially in conjunction with strong tides, and can sweep inland up to 30 miles.