

PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

NOAA's National Weather Service provides the public with forecasts, outlooks, watches and warnings 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

To find the local forecast for your destination go to:

www.weather.gov/lacrosse

Did you know?

- *Lightning is one of nature's deadliest killers.*
- *The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, hotter than the surface of the sun!!*
- *Flash flooding may occur many miles downstream from thunderstorms.*
- *It only takes 2 feet of water over a roadway to float most vehicles.*
- *Severe weather is a frequent visitor to the area, including tornadoes, hail, high winds and flash flooding.*
- *Straight line wind can be as destructive as a tornado, especially on camp grounds.*
- *River forecasts are available for many navigable rivers in the area, including the Mississippi.*



AWARENESS OUTSIDE

Know the difference between watches and warnings.

Weather Watch:

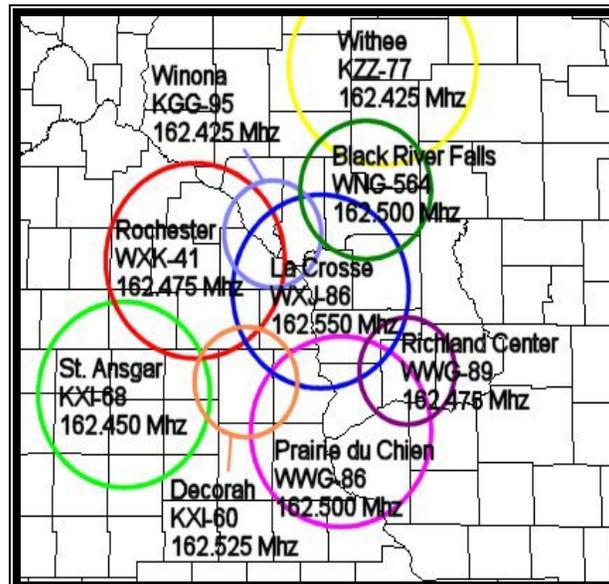
A watch is issued when conditions become favorable for severe weather; it does not necessarily mean it is going to happen. Watch the sky and stay tuned to later forecasts and possible warnings.

Weather Warning:

A warning is issued when either Doppler radar indicates severe weather or someone has spotted severe weather. Now is the time to take action!!

How to receive weather information:

NOAA Weather Radio is the best way to receive forecasts and warnings from the National Weather Service. Weather Radios are available at many electronics stores, with portable hand held models convenient for outdoor use. The map below shows the coverage area and frequencies for this region.



STAYING SAFE IN THE OUTDOORS

BE PREPARED FOR LIGHTNING, FLOODING, HAIL, TORNADOES AND HIGH WINDS!!



National Weather Service
La Crosse, WI

*Serving the citizens of southeast Minnesota,
northeast Iowa and western Wisconsin*



LIGHTNING



Lightning occurs with all thunderstorms. On average from 1994 through 2003 there were 53 fatalities per year in the United States. People who are outdoors, especially near tall trees, in or on water, or on or near hilltops are most at risk.

Lightning facts:

- Each year lightning strikes the Earth 20 million times.
- The energy from one lightning flash could light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months.
- Lightning can occur from cloud-to-cloud, within a cloud, cloud-to-ground, or cloud to air.
- Lightning can strike many miles from the storm. It doesn't have to be raining to get struck.

Lightning safety:

- Move to a sturdy building or a car.
- Do not take shelter in small sheds, under trees, or in convertible automobiles.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- If caught outside with no available shelter, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles.
- The 30/30 lightning safety rule: Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 seconds before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

FLOODS/FLASH FLOODS

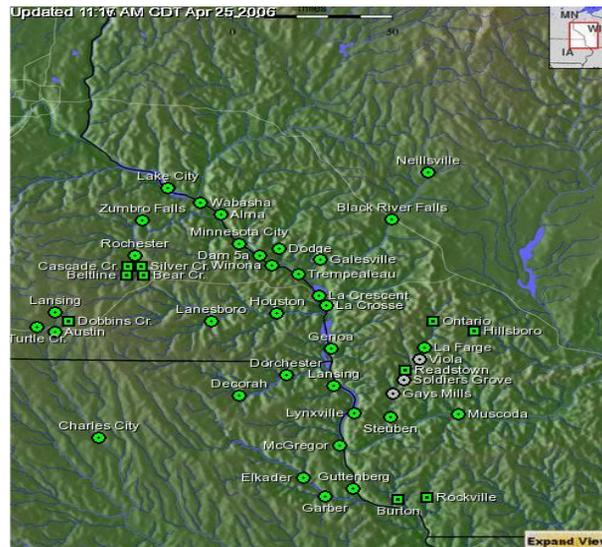
Flash floods and floods are the #1 cause of deaths associated with thunderstorms. From 1993 to 2004 there were an average of 84 fatalities each year nation-wide.

If flooding is occurring or a warning is issued:

- Go to higher ground, but be aware of lightning.
- Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- Never drive through flooded roadways. **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!!**
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Six inches of fast moving water can knock you off your feet; a depth of 2 feet will cause most vehicles to float.

River flooding:

River levels and forecasts are available for the locations below. See our internet homepage, then look up AHPS.



OTHER HAZARDS

Thunderstorms can also produce damaging straight line winds, large hail and tornadoes.

Damaging straight line winds:

- Straight line winds are responsible for most thunderstorm wind damage.
- Campers and mobile homes offer little protection from severe winds. They should be abandoned.
- 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 tornado.

Large hail:

- Large stones fall at speeds faster than 100 mph.
- Causes more than 1 billion dollars in damage to property and crops each year.

Tornadoes:

- It is a myth that hills, rivers and lakes provide protection from tornadoes.
- If caught outside or in a vehicle, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands.
- Mobile homes and campers, even if is tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home or camper and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building or designated storm shelter.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead, leave it immediately for safe shelter.
- Be aware of flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.