**Be Prepared for Severe Weather.**

At the Wauconda Fire District we are always training to help our community in the event of a severe storm, but there are many things you can do to protect yourself when severe weather moves through our town.

**Understand the Weather.**

**Thunderstorms** are relatively common. In fact, approximately 100,000 thunderstorms occur each year in the United States alone.

All thunderstorms are dangerous no matter what their size! The small storms can produce deadly lightning and the big ones produce lightning, high winds, tornadoes, and hail. Never take any thunderstorm lightly!

**Tornadoes** can occur throughout the year, but the peak months in our area are usually March through August. They are most likely to occur between the hours of 3:00 PM and 9:00 PM but can occur at any time.

The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast at speeds from 30 to 70 MPH, but tornadoes have been documented as moving in many directions and at many speeds.

**Lightning** causes an average of 80 fatalities and 300 injuries each year. Surprisingly, the energy from one lightning flash will light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months and the air around the flash is heated to a temperature hotter than the surface of the sun. The shockwave from this rapidly heating and cooling air causes the sound of thunder.

**Prepare for the Weather.**

* Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a battery backup to receive up-to-date weather warnings for our area.
* Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended outdoor activities. Cancel or postpone outdoor activities if severe weather looms.
* Remember, if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning.

**Act During the Storm**

* During a tornado, move to the basement, or to the lowest level of the house in the smallest room. Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible and get under a sturdy piece of furniture. Stay away from windows.
* When there is lightning, move inside a sturdy building. Do not take showers or baths during the storm because pipes can conduct the electricity of a lightning strike. Also, do not use the telephone, as it too, can conduct a lightning strike!
* You should not call the non-emergency number for fire and police to get information! They are out dealing with emergencies and your call for information may delay response to someone in danger or needing medical help. Your NOAA Weather Radio will give you the information you need. NEVER HESITATE TO CALL 9-1-1 FOR AN EMERGENCY!

**Watches and Warnings, Know the Difference**

* *Tornado Watch* – Tornadoes are possible in your area. Stay alert for approaching storms and stay tuned for weather radio updates for your county.
* *Severe Thunderstorm Watch* – Severe Thunderstorms are likely to occur but are not imminent. Remain alert for changing conditions and stay tuned to the radio for updates.
* *Tornado Warning* – A tornado is on the ground or has been sighted on radar in your area! Outdoor warning sirens will activate to alert those outside to take cover inside. Take cover immediately and stay there until the warning is cancelled!
* *Severe Thunderstorm Warning* – Severe Thunderstorms are imminent and have been spotted by radar or trained weather spotters. Severe danger to people and property exists to those in the path of the storm.

For more information go to the NOAA National Weather Service Website at http://www.nws.noaa.gov