



OUTDOOR EVENT SEVERE WEATER PLAN

Revised August 2025

Weather Definitions

- A **Severe Thunderstorm Watch** A Severe Thunderstorm Watch means that weather conditions are favorable for severe thunderstorms producing winds in excess of 60 mph and hail 1 inch in diameter or larger.
- A **Severe Thunderstorm Warning** means that a severe thunderstorm has been detected in the area. Lightning, high winds, heavy rain and/or hail are present with the storm. Wind gusts of 58 mph or stronger and/or hail 1 inch in diameter is expected. Straight line winds can be 100 mph or greater and can cause more damage than a weak tornado. Hail can be much larger than 1' in diameter.
- A **Tornado Watch** is to alert you to the possibility of tornadic activity in the area. Severe thunderstorms and/or tornadoes are possible.
- A **Tornado Warning** is issued when a tornado has actually been sighted or indicated by radar. The warning will indicate the location of the tornado, direction of travel and period of time for movement through a specific area. Tornado: A violently rotating column of air that reaches from the base of a cloud to the ground.
- A **Flash Flood Watch** indicates that flash flooding is a possibility in or close to the watch area. These watches are issued for flooding that is expected to occur within six (6) hours after the heavy rains have ended.
- A **Flash Flood Warning** is issued for life/property threatening flooding that will occur within six (6) hours.
- A **Flood Watch** indicates that widespread flooding is a possibility in or close to the watch area. These watches are issued for flooding that is expected to occur six (6) to twelve (12) hours after the heavy rains have ended.
- A **Flood Warning** is issued for life/property threatening flooding that will occur six (6) to twelve (12) hours from time of issuance for widespread areas.
- A **Winter Storm Watch** is issued when conditions are favorable for the development of hazardous weather elements such as heavy snow and/or blizzard conditions, or significant accumulations of freezing rain or sleet. Watches are usually issued twenty-four (24) to forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the event.
- A **Winter Storm Warning** is a winter weather event having more than one predominant hazard (i.e. heavy snow and blowing snow, snow and ice, snow and sleet, sleet and ice, or snow, sleet and ice) where local warning criteria is reached (usually 6" of snow or more, 1/4" ice, etc. and strong winds).
- A **General Thunderstorm** can produce deadly lightning, but the National Weather Service WILL NOT issue a warning for lightning alone

PRIOR TO THE EVENT

Anderson County Emergency Management (ACEM) shall be contacted any time a large congregation of people has assembled in an outdoor setting in the interest of personal safety.

The purpose of this document is to have an overall general plan of how ACEM will coordinate with the organizers of the above-mentioned event.

- The Emergency Manager or his/her designee shall be contacted and advised of the following in regards to such event:

Date

Location

Time duration of event

Approximate number of people attending

- ACEM will contact the National Weather Service (NWS) in Topeka, Ks one week prior to event to notify them of the upcoming event.
 - NWS Topeka will provide a “long range” forecast at that point for the area of the upcoming event
- ACEM and NWS Topeka will be in contact daily the seven days leading up to the event communicating details and forecasts.
 - In the event of a significant development in the weather forecast, ACEM will contact organizers of the event and discuss possible issues
- NWS Topeka is the official weather authority for Anderson County Emergency Management and Anderson County Fire Dist. #1 (ACFD)
 - There are many available weather forecasts but for safety purposes, NWS Topeka will be the official information used for the duration of the event
 - ACEM will communicate regularly prior to and day of the event with NWS Topeka via:

Landline telephone

Fax/teletype via Garnett dispatch

DURING THE EVENT

Emergency Management will be monitoring weather during the event and will be aware if any severe weather watch has been issued. The weather watches of immediate concern will be thunderstorm, tornado, flood, or winter watches if it deems a concern of public welfare. Winter watches will be at the discretion of the Director of Emergency Management or at the request of NWS.

- ACEM will immediately contact event staff and make them aware of the situation
 - A command post or emergency operations center will be established preferably on the site of the outdoor event
 - A unified command structure with event organizers and ACEM will be created to deal with the severe weather incident
- ACEM will be in contact with NWS Topeka immediately to discuss incoming weather
- ACEM/ACFD units will relay weather conditions or observations to ACEM command staff to be taken into consideration

In the event of:

- A severe weather warning issued by the National Weather Service
- Lightening observed or indicated by NWS or trained weather spotter within 10 miles of the event location
- Any other weather condition that may present a hazard to human life observed by ACEM staff or trained weather spotter

ACEM **WILL ADVISE** event staff that for safety reasons, the event should be immediately suspended or cancelled and all staff and attendees take immediate shelter.

ACEM staff will work with event coordinators in evacuating and/or sheltering event attendees.