



088: Tornadoes and Hurricanes

Some tornado facts

Tornadoes vary in intensity. The Fujita Damage Scale ranks them by wind speed from 72 MPH to over 260 MPH. Some tornadoes have been clocked at over 500 MPH before destroying the instruments that measured their speed. Many tornadoes contain more energy than was generated by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

A tornado can strike anywhere. When one does strike, it is typically one of many funnel clouds in the area. Each can destroy an entire facility in seconds.

Tornadoes are typically accompanied by hail. Even when a tornado is not present, it is common for hail to strike in the area. Hail travels very fast, and a moderately-sized hailstone can put out your eye or break your finger. Large hailstones have killed livestock and other large animals.

A **tornado watch** means conditions are ripe for a tornado. A **tornado warning** means a tornado has been spotted.

Some hurricane facts

Hurricanes are similar to tornadoes, but also carry with them enormous amounts of water. In some cases, hurricanes have pushed a wall of water exceeding 100 feet in height onto the shore and well inland.

When the water recedes, it may pull anything not fastened down back into the ocean with it.

Hurricanes strike coastal areas, but can bring damaging weather hundreds of miles inland. You do not need to be on the coast to be at risk of a hurricane.

Protection

In the event of hail, seek shelter immediately. If you must go outside, wear your hard hat. It can protect your head from most hailstones. Your fingers will not be protected, however, and downed hail does present a slipping hazard to both pedestrians and vehicles.

Hurricanes provide plenty of advance warning. Follow the emergency response system instructions. Lock down the job site as needed, and evacuate. Trying to be a hero by “waiting it out” is foolish. Don’t assume the roads will be easy to travel as everyone else evacuates. Get started as soon as possible.

Tornadoes strike with some warning, but not usually enough for a full evacuation. You must do your best to get to safety without much reaction time.

In the event of a tornado at your job site, report to your tornado assembly area immediately. Stay off the emergency communications, cell phone, and other systems unless you need to be on them.

If lightning causes a fire that forces you outside, seek shelter in another building. If there is no assembly area, get inside a windowless area.

If you are mobile when a tornado has been sighted in your area, you will need to get to shelter. Even if your work truck or personal vehicle were rocket-powered, you would not be able to outrun the average tornado. To see what a tornado might do to you if it picks up your vehicle with you inside it, just step on any soda can.

If it is too dark to see where the tornado might be and you hear what sounds like a

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Obtain a map of the emergency exits and assembly areas at the worksite. Provide a copy for each crew member.

What this Safety Talk covers:

What to do in case of tornado or hurricane.

Discussion notes :

