

SEVERE WEATHER GUIDELINE

Scope:

Our area is prone to heavy thunderstorms, severe winds and snow storms. In any emergency, this Department must have a basic plan of attack to preserve or lessen the effect of the storm on life and property. Storm periods can be divided into three basic phases: storm preparations, storm period, and post storm period. It is essential that Department members understand terminology used by the National Weather Service. Watches indicate that weather conditions are conducive for the formation of storms and the public should expect bad weather. Warnings indicate that a storm is in progress and that persons should take immediate cover.

Storm Preparation:

While under the storm watch, members should expect threatening weather. Members' families should be prepared for threatening weather. Stations should be prepared to respond for emergencies associated with storms. Specialized equipment such as emergency or standby generators should be inspected, tested and operationally ready.

Storm Period:

During any storm, members must care for and provide shelters for their family. This should be done prior to the storm period, as there normally are requests for assistance from the Fire Department.

If the winds exceed 50 mph or conditions place the firefighters and equipment at risk, vehicles should not leave the station unless absolutely necessary. Keep radio traffic to a MINIMUM a written log of activities and locations served should be kept along with a personnel sign in and out log for each day.

Post Storm Period:

Equipment shall be placed back in service as soon as possible. Damaged or broken equipment must be reported to the appropriate company officer. A report of damage shall be prepared and submitted to the Fire Chief indicating the damage and any loss that occurred.

Winter Storms

- If the Town or County Administrator declares a Winter Storm Emergency, the fire station shall be staffed with enough personnel to staff 2741 (4), 2751 (2), 2762(3), and 2771(3). 2762 and 2771 will be staffed with a minimum of one EMT and two are preferred since there may be a delay in ambulance response.
- The Station apron and main parking lot will be kept plowed as needed and if unable to be kept open with the department plow a request will be made for assistance from the Town first and if not available the County.
- If the storm is severe enough to have stranded members and their families the departments plow truck will be allowed to assist these members after approval of the Chief or the Corporation President.

- Work details will be called as needed to keep the station operational or remove snow from the roofs to prevent structural damage.
- If necessary the station will be opened as an emergency shelter. If this happens the Red Cross should be advised of the situation and the station should be manned with a minimum of four personnel. The Auxiliary will be advised and will be responsible for kitchen activities. (Receipts must be kept for all purchases)

Severe Winds, Microburst, or Tornado:

A request for the Fire Department after these type storms can present a unique challenge. Buildings may be partially damaged or destroyed creating a collapse hazard. The first priority shall be to conduct a search for possible victims in buildings, structures, or vehicles that have been struck. A minimum number of fire fighters shall be used to conduct searches. Any persons found should be removed from the building if possible and their injuries assessed and treatment rendered to the ability of the crews on the scene. Persons may have to be treated where they are found. Department crews must also be aware that ambulances may not be available due to their demand elsewhere in the community. An Incident Command Post shall be established to control resources. The Command Post may be located in the fire station or at the Town Municipal Building

Utility Control:

All utilities must be controlled as soon as possible to prevent any unwanted escalation of the situation. It will be imperative that we work closely with all effected utility companies to assist us with controlling the situation.

Natural gas must be shut off at the meter or in the street as broken gas lines in the building can cause an accumulation of gas in pockets or areas.

Propane gas should be turned off at the tanks as soon as possible

Electricity must be controlled to prevent electrical equipment from arcing and introducing ignition sources into the building causing fires. Water must be shut off as accumulation of water in lower areas or on floors can drown trapped occupants or contribute to collapse of the building killing all occupants and rescue personnel. Once utilities have been controlled, this must be communicated to command.

Rescue:

The rescue of endangered occupants will be of the utmost concern. Rescues in heavily damaged or partially collapsed structures will require careful consideration. Shoring equipment, lifting equipment, or even heavy equipment may be required to facilitate rescue. The rescue should be carried out, if possible, with medical personnel present to care for trapped victims. Rescue methods used will vary with the situation, however they will be carried out with safety of the firefighters in mind and so as not to compromise the safety of any endangered occupants. If a collapse rescue team is needed a request will be made to the 911 center.

Securement:

All buildings shall be secured after they have been searched. Buildings shall be marked with an orange X or identified that they have been searched so as not to waste time and resources researching buildings.

Fires:

Fires as a result of storms shall be combated as outlined by our emergency operation procedures for that occupancy.

Mutual Aid:

In the situation of a Town wide severe storm, it may be necessary to request mutual-aid from area agencies to assist us with the tasks that must be completed in a timely manner. Mutual-aid assistance should be requested when it appears that additional resources will be needed beyond the capabilities of our agency. A staging area should be set up and an officer from a mutual-aid company assigned to be in charge of the staging area. The Incident Commander can then request the resources from staging and direct them to the area where they are needed

Mutual Aid to other Jurisdictions:

In the event of major incidents in other parts of the State or Nation where requests for outside assistance have been made, the department will assist if possible. A list of available personnel will be compiled and the Fire Coordinator advised of availability and members will be deployed at his request.

Emergency Purchases:

In the event of the failure of small equipment that cannot be readily repaired and returned to service it will be replaced at the discretion of the Chief or incident commander at the time. If such things as tarps, shoring, or lumber for barricades are needed this will be decided on a case by case need by the incident commander at that time.