

Office of Risk Management
RISK ALERT
No. 2018-07

RE: Tornado Watch

May 15, 2018

The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Watch for Central and Western Massachusetts. The watch is in effect from now until 9 p.m. today as powerful storms approach the state from the west.

In addition, a **severe thunderstorm watch** has been issued for all of Eastern Massachusetts except the Cape and islands. Forecasters warned of possible damaging winds with gusts to 75 miles per hour and hail up to 1.5 inches in diameter. Heavy rain/street flooding is also a concern.

For tornado safety tips go to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/tornado-safety-tips>
Or download our tornado fact sheet: <http://www.rcabrisk.org/tornadoes>

The Office of Risk Management urges you to take the following precautions:

- Have custodians check drains, grates and basins to ensure they are free of leaves and debris.
- Check to see if sump pumps are working.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage to people or property.
- Remove dead or rotting branches that could fall and cause injury or damage.
- Shutter windows. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use a battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio for updates from local officials.

If outdoors, avoid the following:

- Natural lightning rods, such as tall, isolated trees in an open area.
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on the water.
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- Anything metal, such as lawn mowers, motorcycles, golf clubs and bicycles.

After the storm, be sure to inspect basements and roofs for leaks and flooding. In addition, inspect the grounds for weak or damaged tree limbs and have these removed immediately.

Property Damage

Property damage caused by lightning, including damage caused to electrical appliances and wiring, is covered under the property and insurance program. If you experienced a lightning strike that caused damage, contact the Claims Manager immediately at 617-746-5743. If you have any questions, please call the Office of Risk Management at 617-746-5742.