

Before You Head Out

Lightning, flooding rains, large hail and **severe wind gusts** can turn a fun afternoon at a park or campground into a dangerous adventure. If unprepared, a fast approaching storm can become deadly.

Know the answers to these questions:

- What county and city are you visiting?
- Does this campground or park have a designated storm shelter? If not, where will you go if threatening weather is approaching?
- How will you find out if a storm is moving toward your area?

The time to prepare for severe weather is before the storms hit!

What to Listen For

Weather Watch:

A watch is issued when conditions become favorable for severe weather; it does not necessarily mean it is going to happen. Watch the sky and stay tuned for later forecasts and warnings.

Weather Warning:

A warning is issued when severe weather is occurring or is imminent. Now is the time to take action!

When Thunder Roars, Move Indoors

Lightning occurs with all thunderstorms. People who are outdoors are at risk. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning!

- Move to a sturdy building or hard-top car.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- Never take shelter under an isolated tree. If in the woods, take shelter under a grove of shorter trees.
- Stay away from metal objects, such as piers, playgrounds, poles, and fences.

If a Thunderstorm Approaches

Severe thunderstorms can produce damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, and flooding rain. Winds over 60 mph can topple trees, and tear awnings off campers. Wind gusts over 80 mph can cause severe damage to mobile homes, and overturn campers and RVs. Tornadoes can have winds over 100 mph, creating a narrow but deadly path of destruction.

Even non-severe thunderstorms can cause damage. Wind gusts over 45 mph may overturn tents, break branches off trees, and knock down small, rotted or shallow-rooted trees.

When a storm approaches...

- Campers and mobile homes offer little protection from severe winds and falling trees. They should be abandoned.
- Move to a pre-designated shelter. If a storm shelter is not available, move to a sturdy building, preferably one with concrete, brick or stone walls. Shower or bathroom stalls, closets or interior hallways provide the best protection.
- If no shelter is available, consider whether you have enough time to drive to a safer location.

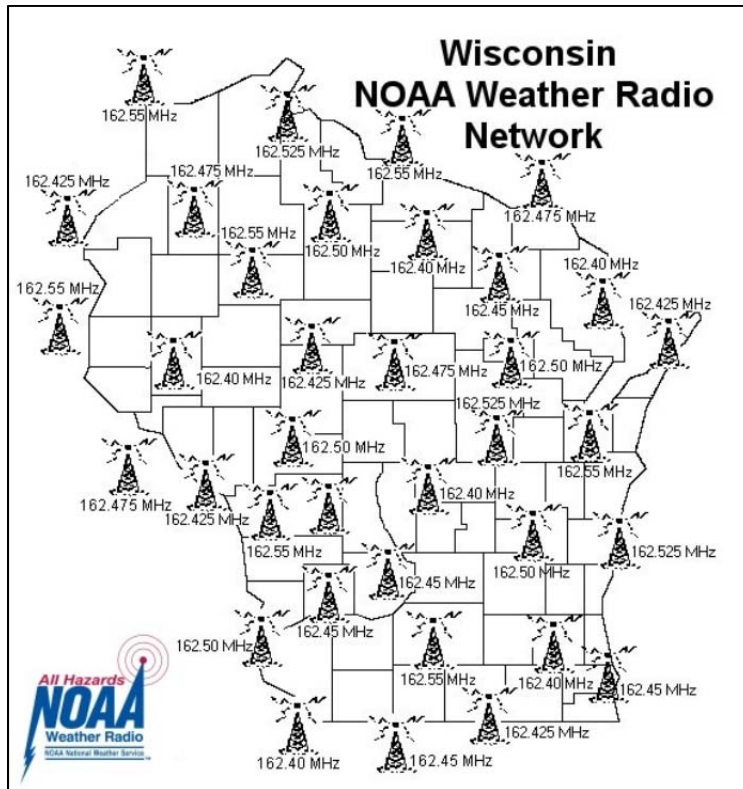
When Setting Up Camp

Many campgrounds and parks are heavily wooded. When deciding where to place your tent or camper, avoid setting up near dead, damaged, diseased or decayed, shallow-rooted or leaning trees.

- Signs of root or tree defects and decay include the presence of mushrooms or shelf fungus, large cavities or hollows, cracks or splits, deadwood, loose or missing bark, bulges, nesting holes, carpenter ants or bees.
- A good indicator of a dangerous leaning tree is the presence of a soil mound at the base of the tree on the opposite side of the lean.
- Some tree species, like maple, elm, willow, ash, and cottonwood are more susceptible to wind damage due to weak branch unions, insect damage, shallow roots or brittle wood.

Stay Informed!

NOAA Weather Radio, the all-hazards radio network from the National Weather Service, is a good way to stay informed about the risk of severe weather. Over 30 stations across Wisconsin broadcast weather information, 24 hours a day. When severe weather threatens, emergency messages are automatically broadcast, any time of the day or night.



The **NWS web app** allows you to keep up with the latest forecast so you can plan your trip before you set up camp and keep tabs of changing weather. Add it to your smart phone home screen:

mobile.weather.gov

Smart phone apps that send you watches and warnings are another great way to stay ahead of the storm. Many apps are free! Check your phone app store for details.

Playing it Safe!

Severe Weather Information for Wisconsin Parks and Campgrounds



National Weather Service
www.weather.gov

