

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Today, at the direction of Governor Bill Lee, TEMA Director Patrick C. Sheehan issued a State of Emergency ahead of expected significant severe storms and flooding. Additionally, Gov. Lee has requested an Emergency Declaration for Tennessee ahead of the forecasted severe weather.

State of Emergency

The State of Emergency allows the state to take measures to protect citizens and expedite assistance, including mobilizing resources and coordinating responses. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) encourages all Tennesseans to take preparedness steps ahead of the severe weather system, with impacts expected Wednesday evening through Saturday afternoon.

Emergency Declaration Request

Gov. Lee has requested an Emergency Declaration for Tennessee. The request includes federal assistance in the form of FEMA Public Assistance Category A (Debris Removal), Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), and Direct Federal Assistance.

National Weather Service forecasts show both significant severe weather and flooding through the weekend, with a high risk of severe weather issued over West Tennessee on Wednesday. Long-tracked, strong tornadoes, significant severe winds, and large hail are all possible. The severe threat will continue through the night. In addition, rainfall totals through Sunday are forecast to be up to 15" for much of West Tennessee, with some areas possibly receiving more.

TEMA continues to work with local, regional, and state partners to support readiness actions and any requests for resources. The state has moved to a Level 3, State of Emergency, to be able to respond to the impending severe weather and to continue to respond to Tropical Storm Helene recovery.

KNOW YOUR ALERTS

Watch vs. Warning

Have multiple ways to receive alerts on changing conditions and understand the terms used by the NWS when those alerts are distributed.

Tornado Watch: Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area (around the size of a city or small county) that may be impacted by a tornado identified by a forecaster on radar or by a trained spotter/law enforcement who is watching the storm.

Flood Watch: Conditions are favorable for flooding. Be prepared!

Flood Warning: Take Action! A Flood Warning is issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.

Flash Flood Warning: Take Action! A Flash Flood Warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground. A flash flood is a sudden violent flood that can take from minutes to hours to develop. It is even possible to experience a flash flood

in areas not immediately receiving rain.

TAKE ACTION

If there is a Tornado Warning issued, seek shelter immediately.

Indoors

Get to a basement or safe room. If there's no basement, get to a small, interior room on the lowest level.

Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

Outdoors or in a Vehicle

If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.

If there's no nearby shelter, take cover in a stationary vehicle and buckle up. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion if possible.

Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.

Watch out for flying debris.

If there is a Flood or Flash Flood Warning issued, move to higher ground immediately.

If told to evacuate, do so immediately.

Don't go into a basement, or any room, if water covers the electrical outlets or if cords are submerged. If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping or popping noises - get out!

Don't walk through flood waters. It only takes 6 inches of moving water to knock you off your feet.

Do NOT drive into flooded roadways or around a barricade; Turn Around, Don't Drown! Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide hazards such as sharp objects, washed out road surfaces, electrical wires, chemicals, etc.

BE PREPARED

Stay Informed

Monitor Official Sources: Stay up to date with current weather information through your local National Weather Service Office and through your local news.

Sign Up for Alerts: Make sure weather notifications are active on your mobile device. Some counties may offer emergency alerts through the local emergency management agency.

Have a Weather Radio: NOAA Weather Radios can provide life-saving alerts, even during power outages.

Make a Plan

Create a Family Communication Plan: Your family may not be together when a disaster happens. Make sure everyone knows how to get in touch with one another and where to meet if separated. Know where you would go if you needed to evacuate.

Build a Kit

Essentials: Your emergency kit should include water, non-perishable food, medications, flashlights, batteries, first aid supplies, and important documents.

Consider Specific Needs: Your kit should also include supplies that are specific to your daily needs and responsibilities. Don't forget to pack supplies for pets, infants, or elderly family members.

Nighttime Severe Weather Checklist

Test your weather radio to ensure it's functioning properly before going to bed.

Keep your phone fully charged.

Make sure "Do Not Disturb" is turned off on your phone and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are enabled.

Have a safety plan ready and know where your emergency go-kit is.

Check the forecast before going to bed when those alerts are distributed.