

What's on the horizon?

**Protect
yourself from
severe weather**

**in Manitoba's
Provincial Parks.**

Manitoba 

Severe weather conditions often develop during Manitoba summers. Thunder, lightning, hail and even tornadoes can develop quickly and have the potential to be extremely dangerous.

During severe weather, assistance from park staff will vary depending on the location. Weather conditions and the number of park visitors will also affect emergency response times. That is why it's important that you protect yourself when severe weather threatens. The following information will help ensure your personal safety.

Look for the signs

Hot and/or muggy days and warm nights indicate that thunderstorms may be forming, so be prepared. Always keep your eye on the sky and watch for the possible development of thunderstorms.

Listen for the warnings

Environment Canada monitors the weather. If a severe storm is on the horizon, the weather service issues watches, advisories and warnings through national, regional and local radio and television stations and Environment Canada's Weatheradio.

Weather Watch - conditions are favourable for a severe storm, even though one has not yet developed. This is usually issued early in the day. Keep monitoring weather conditions and listen for updated statements.

Weather Warning - severe weather is happening or hazardous weather is highly probable.

Be Prepared

Pack a "72 Hour" emergency kit

Your kit should include food, clothing, blankets, medication, bottled water and first-aid and tool kits, as well as flashlights and a battery-powered radio, with extra batteries for both. You should have enough supplies in your kit to last 72 hours.

Boating Safety

- Always check the weather forecast before you go boating.
- Never go out in a boat during a storm.
- If you are on the water and you see a storm approaching, head for shore immediately.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are common on the prairies. They are often accompanied by hail, lightning, high winds, heavy rain and, occasionally, tornadoes.

Lightning - No aspect of severe summer weather presents more of a danger than lightning. To estimate how far away lightning is, count the seconds between the flash of lightning and the thunderclap. If you count fewer than 30 seconds, take shelter. Remain sheltered for 30 minutes after hearing the last thunderclap.

If you are far from shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, lightning may be about to hit you. Kneel on the ground immediately, with feet together; place your hands on your knees, and bend forward. Don't lie flat.

If your group is in the open space, spread out, keeping people several yards apart.

Take Shelter -

If you are camping in a tent, remember **tents offer no protection from lightning**. If you have time, run to your car, get inside, roll up the windows and do not touch anything metal. If your car is parked near trees, move it to an open space. If a cabin or a camper is available, get inside but don't touch any electrical appliances as lightning may travel through these objects. If you cannot get to a car or a cabin, leave your tent and squat down away from any trees with only your feet touching the ground. Do not seek shelter under tall trees. This may help you stay dry but it will significantly increase your risk of being struck by lightning.

Tornadoes

These devastating wind storms form suddenly, are often preceded by warm, humid weather and are always produced by thunderstorms. **Do not follow tornadoes in your car or attempt to take photographs of them - if you see a tornado, take shelter immediately.**

Tornado warning signs include the following:

- An extremely dark sky, sometimes highlighted by green or yellow clouds
- A rumbling or whistling sound
- A funnel cloud at the rear base of a thundercloud, often behind a curtain of heavy rain or hail.

Take Shelter - Cabins offer little or no protection from tornadoes. Leave your RV, tent, cabin or campsite immediately. Take shelter in a sturdy building and if there are no buildings nearby, do not seek shelter in your car. Lie down in a low area, covering your head and the back of your neck. Do not try and outrun the storm. If you can, wrap some clothing or a blanket around your body as even small objects can cause serious damage when propelled by tornado winds. Do not take shelter under your trailer, in your vehicle, near big trees, or under highway bridges or overpasses.





Emergency Response in Provincial Parks

- If an evacuation is ordered, park staff will alert visitors or post an Evacuation Alert or Evacuation Order with instructions at the park office or information board.
- Park staff will evacuate campers via directed routes. Listen to and obey all staff instructions.
- Stay calm and be patient.
- Take only essential personal items (identification, cash, keys, medication, personal/baby care products, first aid/emergency kit) and pets.

After Severe Weather

- Be prepared to act to ensure your own safety. Park staff may not be able to get to your area immediately.
- Administer emergency care to injured family and friends. If additional care is required, get help from the local park office.
- Stay away from power lines and puddles that have electrical wires in them.
- Watch for broken glass, nails and other sharp objects.
- Stay out of any heavily damaged buildings as they could collapse at any time.
- Use flashlights rather than matches or lighters, in case there are leaking propane pipes or fuel tanks nearby.
- When phone lines are available for public use, call your family's emergency contacts to let them know what happened, that you are safe and how to contact you.

For More Information

For more information about how to prepare for severe weather, contact the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization at 945-4772 or Manitoba Conservation Public Information at 945-6784 (Winnipeg) or 1-800-214-6497 (Toll free) or visit manitobaparks.com.