

## **Severe Weather in Colorado: Be Prepared Wherever You Are!**

Colorado is known for its beautiful mountains and more than 300 days of sunshine a year, but it is also known for rapidly changing and severe weather. Thunderstorms, lightning, hail, high winds, flash flooding, and even tornadoes can occur across the Front Range, particularly during the spring and summer months. The severe weather season in Colorado typically runs from April through early October, with the most active period from May to August.

Because the campus community spends time in many different locations throughout the day (classrooms, outdoor spaces, transit routes, and work locations), it's important to be prepared wherever you are. Staying aware of weather conditions and knowing how to respond can help keep you safe if severe weather develops.

### **Common Types of Severe Weather in Colorado**

#### **Thunderstorms and Lighting**

Thunderstorms are one of the most common severe weather hazards in Colorado. Many storms produce frequent cloud-to-ground lightning. Lightning can strike several miles away from the main storm, making outdoor activities dangerous. If you hear thunder, move indoors immediately.

#### **Hail**

Colorado experiences some of the largest and most frequent hailstorms in the United States. Hail can range from pea-sized pellets to giant stones the size of grapefruits. Large hail can break windows, damage vehicles, and injure people and animals outside. If a hailstorm develops or a Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued for your area, move indoors and stay away from windows.

#### **High Winds**

Strong winds can occur in and near thunderstorms or even be produced from showers that produce little or no rain - called a microburst. Wind gusts can exceed 60 mph, potentially toppling trees, blowing debris, and causing power outages. During high-wind events, avoid areas with trees and construction zones, and be aware of flying projectiles.

#### **Tornado**

Tornadoes occur in Colorado along the Front Range and eastern plains. When conditions are favorable, the National Weather Service will issue a Tornado Watch. If a tornado is detected or indicated on radar, a Tornado Warning will be issued. If a Tornado Warning is issued, move immediately to the lowest level of the building, go to an interior room away from windows, and avoid large open spaces.

#### **Flash Flooding**

Flash flooding occurs when heavy rain falls quickly. Flood waters can rise rapidly and cover roads or walkways. Never attempt to walk or drive through floodwater. Remember, Turn Around, Don't Drown.

### **Be Prepared Wherever You Are**

Severe weather can develop quickly in Colorado, so it is important to be prepared whether you are in class, walking between buildings, attending an event, or commuting to campus.

A few simple steps can help you stay safe:

### **Stay Informed**

- Monitor local weather forecasts.
- Sign up to receive emergency notifications where you live and on campus.
- Enable emergency alerts on your phone.
- Pay attention to all emergency notifications.

### **Know Where to Go**

- Identify safe shelter areas in buildings you frequently visit.
- Move indoors immediately when storms approach.
- Avoid windows and large open spaces during severe weather.

### **Take Action When Alerts Are Issued**

- Follow instructions in emergency alerts.
- Seek shelter immediately during warnings.
- Wait for official updates before returning outdoors.