

NOVEMBER 2009

WINDSTORMS/TORNADOES AWARENESS MONTH

You Don't Want To Be Blown Away!



High winds, particularly the hot, dry Santa Ana winds that visit Southern California every fall, are another force of nature with which residents must reckon. High winds can cause structural and nonstructural damage, downed power lines and increase the risk of wildfire. In some isolated canyon areas, Santa Ana gusts can reach speeds of more than 100 miles per hour, increasing the threat. Although tornadoes are more common in midwestern and southern states, California is not immune. The region averages about 20 tornadoes or water spouts per year. According to the National Weather Service, tornadoes usually occur along the coast during the cold of winter, but they can also occur during the summer.

Before or During a Windstorm or Tornado:

- Listen to an Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio or television station and/or purchase a weather alert radio. (NOAA Weather Radio).
- Evaluate the impact of the winds on the fire hazard in your area.
- Go indoors. Avoid areas near windows and doors. Take cover under sturdy desks or tables located in an interior room on the lowest floor of your home. Protect your head and neck with your arms.
- Avoid using elevators. High winds may cause a power outage.
- If outdoors, get away from trees, walls, signs, power lines and other objects that could fall and injure you.
- Listen to the radio or watch television for information and instructions from local officials.
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies or damage to local officials.

After the Windstorm or Tornado:

- Check yourself and family members for injuries. Treat those with minor injuries. Transport those with major injuries to the emergency room.
- Keep family members together. Discuss what happened with children.
- Check for and document damage and hazards:
 - Broken windows
 - Ceilings, roofs, walls
 - Downed or damaged trees
 - Downed signs or power lines
- Stay out of obviously damaged buildings, and cooperate with local emergency officials.

✓ HEALTH TIP:

Windstorms can irritate your eyes and respiratory system. During a windstorm it is important to stay indoors and use protective eye wear and a dust mask as needed. Also, keep yourself hydrated by drinking water.

www.espfocus.org

Visit our new site, ReadyLa.org – the emergency readiness, response and recovery website.



200 North Spring Street, Room 1533, Los Angeles, CA 90012
www.lacity.org/emd (213) 978-2222 (ph) (213) 847-0652 (TTY)