



GOVERNOR'S DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

For immediate release:

HAIL AND STRAIGHT LINE WINDS

AUSTIN – Thousands of thunderstorms strike Texas every year, many of them severe. A severe thunderstorm is defined as a storm that produces winds of at least 58 mph, hail three-fourths of an inch in diameter or a tornado.

While tornadoes are extremely dangerous, wind and hail storms can do similar damage, so thunderstorms should never be taken for granted. Dangers include:

- Straight line winds, or winds in excess of 100 mph, strong enough to uproot trees and cause substantial damage to buildings.
- Downburst winds – severe and rapid downdrafts of air that push damaging winds outward on or near ground level, especially dangerous to aviation.
- Hail falling to earth at speeds nearing 100 mph, damaging trees, crops, automobiles and buildings. Hail storms cause more than \$1 billion in damage nationwide each year.

As with other severe weather threats, the key is to monitor TV and radio broadcasts as well as NOAA weather radio for storm warnings and watches.

When straight line winds threaten, respond the same way you would to the threat of a tornado. Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom or closet. Stay away from windows. If you are outside, cover your head to protect against flying debris.

If you encounter hail while driving, turn around. You may be driving into the core of a thunderstorm where tornadoes form.



For more information, contact GDEM Public Information at 512.424.2138 or visit GDEM's Web site: www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem.