

## TOOLBOX TALK

# Extreme Weather Preparedness

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Weather-related conditions caused 100 workplace deaths in 2023 (BLS). High winds killed 18 workers, ice/snow killed 45, and storms killed 7. Outdoor workers face floods, wildfires, and severe winds that can strike with little warning. Preparation is the only defense.

**100**

Weather-related workplace deaths in 2023 (BLS)

**18**

Workers killed by high winds/gusts in 2023 (BLS)

**100%**

Weather emergencies are survivable with prep

## 5 Rules for Extreme Weather Preparedness

Weather doesn't wait — you must be ready before the storm arrives:

**1**

### MONITOR WEATHER DAILY — BEFORE AND DURING WORK

Check forecasts before each shift. Assign someone to monitor alerts. Have a weather radio or app on site.

**2**

### KNOW YOUR SITE-SPECIFIC TRIGGERS AND ACTIONS

High wind shutdown speed (usually 25-40 mph). Flash flood zones. Wildfire smoke thresholds. Know them.

**3**

### HAVE A SHELTER AND EVACUATION PLAN

Where do you go for each type of weather? Tornado shelter vs flood evacuation are opposite actions.

**4**

### SECURE THE SITE BEFORE WEATHER HITS

Tie down materials, lower cranes, secure scaffolding, store loose objects. A flying sheet of plywood kills.

**5**

### NEVER WORK IN CONDITIONS BEYOND SAFE LIMITS

If conditions exceed safe thresholds — STOP WORK. No deadline is worth a life. Resume when it's safe.

## Daily Weather Readiness Check

- Has the weather forecast been checked for today and tomorrow?
- Are high-wind, flood, and severe storm triggers posted and known by all?
- Is there a designated shelter or evacuation route for each weather type?
- Are materials and equipment secured against wind?
- Does everyone know who makes the stop-work call for weather?

## How to Respond to Each Weather Emergency

### High Winds (>25 mph sustained)

Stop crane operations, lower booms. Secure scaffolding. Move indoors. Flying debris is the #1 killer.

### Flooding / Flash Floods

Move to high ground immediately. Never walk or drive through floodwater. 6 inches knocks you down.

### Wildfire / Smoke

Monitor air quality index (AQI). N95 masks at AQI 151+. Evacuate if fire approaches. Know escape routes.

### Lightning / Thunderstorms

30/30 rule: if flash-to-bang is <30 sec, seek shelter. Wait 30 min after last flash. Avoid metal structures.

### Tornado / Severe Storm Warning

Move to lowest interior room or designated shelter. Stay away from windows, cranes, and scaffolding.

### Extreme Cold / Ice Storm

Watch for ice on walkways, ladders, scaffolds. Roads may be impassable. Monitor for hypothermia signs.

## Common Mistakes During Extreme Weather

- ✗ "It doesn't look that bad" — weather changes in minutes. Trust alerts, not appearances
- ✗ Continuing crane operations in high winds — wind loads on crane booms cause catastrophic collapse
- ✗ Driving or walking through floodwater — just 6 inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet
- ✗ Waiting too long to evacuate — when the storm is overhead, it's already too late to move safely

## Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Designate a weather watcher every shift — one person responsible for monitoring alerts and conditions
- ✓ Wind speed matters: 25 mph = scaffolding unsafe, 30 mph = crane shutdown, 40 mph = stop all outdoor work
- ✓ Flash floods kill more people than any other weather event — if water is rising, move to high ground NOW
- ✓ Keep emergency supplies on site: first aid kit, water, weather radio, flashlights, charged phone

## Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What is today's weather forecast and are any alerts active?
2. What is our wind speed shutdown threshold and who monitors it?
3. Where is our severe weather shelter and flood evacuation route?
4. Are all loose materials and equipment secured against wind right now?
5. What would we do right now if a tornado warning was issued?

### TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance sheet attached:  Yes