

Clinton County Emergency Management Agency

CLINTON COUNTY, OHIO



Household Severe Weather Checklist

For the _____ Household

Revised
February 2026

Updated Date: _____

Clinton County Household Checklist

A. SEVERE WEATHER CHECKLIST

This checklist helps households prepare for Spring severe weather by reducing risk ahead of time, setting up alerts and shelter plans, and knowing what to do during and after storms. It should be used for severe thunderstorms, lightning, tornado watches and warnings, and power outages caused by high winds or storm damage. It also supports safe recovery actions after a storm, including debris hazards, damage reporting, and seeking assistance if disaster programs are activated.

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| Line # | SEVERE WEATHER Recommended Action | Notes: |
|---|---|--------|
| PREPARE PHASE | | |
| <p>The Prepare Phase is where your household builds a calm, confident advantage before storms are on top of you. Instead of relying on luck, this phase focuses on simple, practical actions that reduce confusion under stress: knowing where to shelter, how to communicate, what supplies matter most, and how to protect the people and pets who depend on you. The goal is not perfection — it is making sure that when severe weather hits, your household can move quickly, make good decisions, and stay safe without panic.</p> | | |
| I. | Household Emergency Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Choose a home “meet-up spot” (inside) and a neighborhood “meet-up spot” (outside). <input type="checkbox"/> Pick an out-of-area contact everyone can text if local networks are busy. <input type="checkbox"/> Decide who checks on who (elderly family, neighbors, friends who live alone). <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for school/daycare: who can pick up, and where you will reunite. <input type="checkbox"/> Write your plan down and keep a copy where everyone can find it. | |
| a) | Shelter Plan (Tornado + Severe Wind): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pick your best tornado shelter spot now: lowest level, interior room, no windows. <input type="checkbox"/> Stage shelter supplies in/near that spot: flashlight, shoes, helmets, radio, phone charger, first aid, needed meds. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice sheltering (including kids): “Grab shoes + phone + flashlight + pets” and go. | |

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|--------|---|--------|
| | If You Live in an Apartment or Mobile Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Apartment: identify the safest interior area (lowest floor possible, interior hallway/room, away from windows). <input type="checkbox"/> Apartment: know your building exits and stair routes (don't rely on elevators). <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home: pre-identify your nearest safer shelter (storm shelter, sturdy building, trusted neighbor with basement). <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home: plan to leave early for a safer shelter when severe weather is likely (do not wait for the last minute). | |
| b) | Supplies (Kit + Power) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build/update your home kit: water, food, flashlight, batteries, first aid, hygiene items, manual can opener. <input type="checkbox"/> Add "shelter extras": sturdy shoes, bike/ sports helmets, work gloves, blankets, whistle. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for outages: charge power banks, set up car chargers, store fresh batteries. <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-pack a small cooler plan for storm days (drinks/snacks/next meal to reduce fridge openings during outages). <input type="checkbox"/> If you use backup power (generator/power station): confirm it works, confirm cords/adapters, and store fuel safely. <input type="checkbox"/> Store at least 3 days of drinking water (more if possible), and plan for alternate water access if you use a well. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep copies of IDs, insurance, and medical info in a waterproof pouch. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a small amount of cash on hand (small bills). | |
| c) | Power-Dependent Household Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If anyone uses medical equipment that needs power (oxygen concentrator, CPAP, feeding pump), make a backup plan now. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep backup supplies and a charging plan for medical devices, and write down the device model and supplier contact info. <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, ask your doctor or supplier about backup power options. | |
| d) | Pets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build a pet go-kit: food, water, bowls, meds, leash, carrier, waste bags, comfort item. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure pets have ID tags and up-to-date contact info. | |

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| | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a current pet photo on your phone (and a printed copy in your kit). <input type="checkbox"/> Keep vaccination records and vet info in a waterproof pouch. | |
| e) | TECH Ready <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a “text-first” rule during disasters (calls often fail when networks are overloaded). <input type="checkbox"/> Write down key numbers (911, family, out-of-area contact, utilities, insurance, landlord). <input type="checkbox"/> Download offline maps for your area and your shelter route. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep one battery radio (ideally with weather radio capability) and fresh batteries. <input type="checkbox"/> Decide your backup comms: group text + a simple check-in schedule; optional radios if your household uses them. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid rumor traps: use official alerts and trusted sources first before sharing posts. | |
| NOTIFICATION PHASE | | |
| <p>The Notification Phase is about making sure your household receives warnings early enough to act, even at night or when you are busy, asleep, or away from home. This phase focuses on setting up multiple alert methods (not just one), understanding the difference between a watch and a warning, and making sure every household member knows what to do when an alert comes in. The goal is to avoid the most common failure point in severe weather: not getting the message, getting it too late, or assuming sirens alone will cover you.</p> | | |
| 1. | Alerts and Warning Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Turn on Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on every phone in the household. <input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for local Clinton County alerts and verify your address/profile is correct. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider a NOAA weather radio for overnight storms and backup alerting. <input type="checkbox"/> Know the terms: <input type="checkbox"/> Watch = conditions are possible (get ready). <input type="checkbox"/> Warning = happening/soon (take action now). <input type="checkbox"/> Sirens are for outdoors—don’t rely on hearing them indoors or while asleep; use phone alerts and a weather radio. <input type="checkbox"/> Set a “storm day” trigger: when severe weather is forecast, start the same-day checklist early. | EMA |

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| MITIGATION | | |
| <p>The Mitigation Phase is where your household reduces the damage a storm can cause before it ever happens. This phase is about fixing small vulnerabilities that turn into big problems during high winds, heavy rain, and power outages, such as loose outdoor items, weak tree limbs, poor drainage, and unsafe backup power habits. The goal is to make your home, property, and routines more storm-resistant so that severe weather causes fewer emergencies, fewer injuries, and less costly cleanup.</p> | | |
| 2. | Refrigerator / Freezer Tips (Power Outage Ready) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep your refrigerator stocked (a full cold fridge stays cold longer than an empty one). <input type="checkbox"/> Store extra bottled water in the fridge to add thermal mass and provide ready drinking water. <input type="checkbox"/> Freeze a few bottles of water (leave a little air space so they don't burst) to help keep the freezer cold longer. <input type="checkbox"/> Use frozen water bottles as emergency ice packs for a cooler if the outage is extended. <input type="checkbox"/> Put a cup of water in the freezer and freeze it solid. Place a coin on top to check later if the freezer thawed. <input type="checkbox"/> During an outage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. | |
| 3. | "Storm Day" Meal Tips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make one easy meal ahead of time (sandwich supplies, snacks, ready-to-eat food) in case power drops. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid opening the fridge repeatedly "just to check" — decide what you need before opening it. | |
| 4. | Power / Lighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep at least one flashlight in each bedroom (storms often hit at night). <input type="checkbox"/> Use headlamps for hands-free lighting during cleanup. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid candles if possible (fires increase during outages). | |
| 5. | Phones / Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep one phone charger in the car at all times. <input type="checkbox"/> Send short texts instead of making calls (networks overload fast). | |
| 6. | Water + Sanitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep baby wipes and hand sanitizer available if water service is limited. | |

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| | <input type="checkbox"/> Fill your bathtub with water only if severe weather and outages are likely (use for flushing, not drinking). | |
| RESPONSE | | |
| <p>The Response Phase is the part of the checklist you use when severe weather is possible today or actively happening. This phase is about fast, simple actions that protect life first: staying alert, securing what you can, getting everyone to the right shelter location quickly, and avoiding high-risk behavior like driving into flooded areas or going outside to watch the storm. The goal is to reduce injuries and prevent avoidable emergencies while the storm is still in progress.</p> | | |
| 7. | When Storms are Possible Today (Same-Day Checklist) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check the forecast and your alert apps early in the day. <input type="checkbox"/> Charge phones and all power banks to 100%. <input type="checkbox"/> Put shoes, helmets, flashlights, and pet carriers/leashes where you can grab them fast. <input type="checkbox"/> Secure outdoor items (or move them inside). <input type="checkbox"/> Park vehicles in the safest spot available (away from big trees). <input type="checkbox"/> If you may lose power: set up your cooler, prep easy meals, and minimize fridge/freezer opening plans. <input type="checkbox"/> Check on neighbors who may need help (older adults, disabled residents, families with small kids). | |
| 8. | During Severe Thunderstorms (Wind + Lightning) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go indoors and stay away from windows and glass doors. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using corded devices during lightning. <input type="checkbox"/> Don't shower or bathe during lightning (avoid plumbing). <input type="checkbox"/> If you hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck—stay inside. <input type="checkbox"/> Don't go outside to "watch" the storm. <input type="checkbox"/> Never drive through flooded roads. Turn around. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid driving around storm damage zones unless absolutely necessary. | |
| 9. | During a Tornado Warning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go to your shelter location immediately (do not wait). <input type="checkbox"/> Protect your head and neck (helmet, pillows, blankets). <input type="checkbox"/> Keep pets with you in the shelter area (leash/carrier). <input type="checkbox"/> Stay in shelter until the warning is over and conditions are clearly safe. | |

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| RECOVERY (After the Storm) | | |
| <p>The Recovery Phase begins once the storm has passed and it is safe to come out, but hazards are still everywhere. This phase focuses on preventing the most common post-storm injuries and deaths, such as contact with downed power lines, carbon monoxide poisoning from unsafe generator use, and injuries during cleanup. It also guides your household through the practical next steps: checking on neighbors, documenting damage for insurance, tracking expenses, and using county reporting and assistance options if they are activated.</p> | | |
| 10. | First 30 Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check for injuries and provide first aid. Call 911 for life-threatening emergencies. <input type="checkbox"/> If you smell gas or hear hissing: leave immediately and call the gas company/911 from outside. <input type="checkbox"/> Stay far away from downed power lines (assume they are live). <input type="checkbox"/> Use text messages first to let family know your status. <input type="checkbox"/> Take photos/video of damage before cleanup, moving items, or throwing anything away (insurance and reporting). <input type="checkbox"/> When safe, check on nearby neighbors and report urgent needs to 911. | |
| 11. | After-Storm Cleanup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wear thick-soled shoes outside after storms (nails and broken glass are everywhere). <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a trash bag, work gloves, and safety glasses in your cleanup supplies. | |
| 12. | Next 72 Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Watch for hazards: broken glass, nails, unstable trees/limbs, damaged roofs, flooded areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Use protective gear for cleanup (gloves, eye protection, sturdy shoes). <input type="checkbox"/> If frozen food thawed completely, it may not be safe — when in doubt, toss it. <input type="checkbox"/> If refrigerated food is warm too long, throw it out (food poisoning after disasters is common). <input type="checkbox"/> If you have the option, use a cooler with ice/frozen bottles to protect the most important food first (meds, baby formula, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Generator/grill/heater safety: run outside only, away from doors/windows; never run in a home or garage (carbon monoxide can kill fast). <input type="checkbox"/> Don't overload extension cords or power strips during outages. | |

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| | <input type="checkbox"/> If you are not trained for chainsaw work, don't do it—injuries spike after storms. <input type="checkbox"/> Save receipts and track costs (lodging, repairs, supplies, debris work). <input type="checkbox"/> Follow local guidance for debris cleanup and disposal. Do not burn debris unless officially allowed. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid driving in flooded areas or storm damage zones unless absolutely necessary. | |
| 13. | REPORTING AND ASSISTANCE <input type="checkbox"/> Report damage through the county Damage Assessment process if requested. <input type="checkbox"/> Use county debris guidance and assistance options if available. https://www.cc-ema.org/debris <input type="checkbox"/> If a disaster program opens: review Individual Assistance info and apply if you qualify. | |