

# Thunderstorm Safety

There were 333 weather related fatalities in 2014, according to the National Weather Service. In addition, 2,187 people were injured. Thunderstorms were by far the most dangerous type of storm, causing 1,051 injuries and 103 deaths. Although it sounds dramatic, educating yourself about these dangerous storms can be the difference between life and death.

First and foremost, it is important to know the difference between the different types of watches and warnings that may be issued during a severe weather event.



*Gifford Tornado 11/13/13 - Photo by Jessie Starkey*

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** – Severe thunderstorms are possible. Watch the sky and listen to local news stations for more information. Prepare to take shelter.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** – Severe thunderstorms are occurring. Take shelter. Listen to local news stations to receive warnings and severe weather statements. Stay away from windows and avoid using corded electrical devices during the storm.

**Tornado Watch** – Tornadoes are possible. Be prepared to take shelter. If you see any rotating funnel-shaped clouds, call 911 and report them immediately to local law enforcement.

**Tornado Warning** – A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately. Turn on a battery powered radio or television and wait for the all clear announcement. It is important to note that although meteorologists are making great advancements, you still have only 13 minutes to move to safety before the tornado will strike (on average). Time is of the essence when a tornado warning has been issued.

Although this may seem obvious, it is important to know what county you are located in and what cities and towns are nearby. Watches and warnings are issued by county and television stations often indicate the paths of storms by referencing nearby towns.

**Rantoul is located in Champaign County. Nearby towns include Champaign, Urbana, Mahomet, Ludlow, Thomasboro, and Gifford.**

During the unpredictable spring and summer months, being aware of the weather is critical. Try to monitor the forecast and hazardous weather outlook frequently. Additionally, keep an eye to the sky and watch for signs of approaching storms. If a storm is approaching, find a radio (either AM/FM or weather specific) and listen for potential watch and warning information. If at all possible, remain indoors until the danger has passed. If the storm causes a power outage, call Public Works at (217) 892-6526 for assistance 24/7. If you see a downed power line, call 911.