

I love the freedom of the open road. There is nothing like exploring the back roads in your RV. You can go where you want and when you want, in your house on wheels, and because of this, often times you find yourself in a new destination everyday. Something that many RVers do not take into consideration with this freedom to roam is the weather conditions where you are traveling too or spending the night. RV's are great, but they are not safe in severe weather like lightning and thunderstorms with high winds, tornadoes and hurricanes.

When you are at home, you usually know what the weather forecast is from the newspaper, radio or television. When you travel three or four hundred miles a day in your RV the weather conditions can change several times. Many times when you stop for the night somewhere all you want to do is get some rest. The weather is the last thing on your mind. The problem with this is severe weather can occur without much warning, and if you are caught in it, it can be disastrous.

So, what do we do? What's the plan? Plan is the key word here. RVers need to have an emergency plan in case of a severe storm. For starters, have you ever heard of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio or NWR? The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information directly from a nearby National Weather Service Office. They broadcast National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day. Alerts inform people if they need to take some type of action in order to protect themselves, such as "seeking shelter" or "to evacuate an area immediately!" What does this mean to RVers? It means if you owned a battery operated weather radio receiver you could monitor weather conditions no matter where you are!

Every RVer should own a weather radio receiver. Receivers are available at most retail stores that sell electronic equipment. Prices can range anywhere from \$25 to \$200 depending on the quality of the receiver and its features. I personally own two weather radio receivers. My Midland WR-300 works off AC power or four AA batteries when the power is out. It has an alert feature that alarms when the National Weather Service issues severe weather announcements or emergency information. I also have a portable handheld Midland 40 channel CB, with a 10-weather channel receiver. It works off six AA rechargeable batteries or any 12-volt receptacle. It is well worth the investment to know what type of weather to expect when traveling or camping in your RV. When we are at home, we use the weather radio receiver in the house. For more information on the NOAA Weather Radio visit their website at [www.nws.noaa.gov/](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/)

OK, the first step to our emergency weather plan is to get a weather radio receiver if you don't already have one, and to always monitor it when you use your RV. The next step is to develop an emergency evacuation plan, to use in the event of severe weather. When you arrive at a campground, ask at the check-in desk about an emergency plan in case of a severe storm such as a tornado, or a thunderstorm with high winds. If they don't have a plan you need to make your own. Locate a structure that is safer than your RV, like a

bathroom or the campground office. Always stay on the lowest level possible and away from doors and windows. Brief everybody with you on the emergency plan. Explain to children how to respond to different disasters and the dangers of severe weather, fires, and other emergencies. Instruct children on emergency exits. Instruct them on how and when to call 911. Make sure everybody knows exactly what his or her job is in case of severe weather. Monitor the weather radio for emergency information. Emergency weather watches and warnings are for counties and towns, so always check a map for the county or town where you are staying.

Have an emergency supply kit made up and easily accessible. The kit should contain flashlights, batteries, rain ponchos, a portable weather radio, first aid kit, non-perishable packaged or canned food and a manual can opener, blankets, prescription and non-prescription drugs, pet supplies, bottled water and any special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

To learn more about how to prepare for and react to different types of severe weather take a moment to visit <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>.

Remember, RV's are not safe in severe weather! This includes severe thunderstorms with high winds, tornadoes and hurricanes. Learn about different types of weather hazards, get a weather radio if you don't have one, create a plan with your family, practice and maintain the plan. Now go RVing and have fun.

Happy Camping,  
Mark

Mark Polk is the owner of RV Education 101. He also hosts the RV Savvy segments on RVTV, which airs on the Outdoor Channel. RV Education 101 is a North Carolina based company that produces professional training videos, DVDs and e-books on how to use and maintain your RV. Our goal is to make all of your RV experiences safe, fun and stress free.  
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