

Hail



These hard, frozen nuggets are formed when raindrops pass through a belt of cold air on their way to earth. The cold air causes the raindrops to freeze into small blocks of ice. Hail most commonly causes damage to property, vehicles (remember all of those “Hail Sales” at your local dealership?) and crops; more than \$1 billion in damage each year. In fact, the costliest thunderstorm event in U.S. history struck Fort Worth in 1995. But considering the fact that large stones can fall at speeds faster than 100 mph, it’s important that you cover your noggin and learn what to do when hailstorm conditions are present.

Hailstorm Safety Tips:

- If weather conditions are prime for a storm, move cars, boats, RVs, and lawn and patio furniture into a covered area.
- During a storm, seek shelter. Hail of any size can be dangerous when pelted ^{[[L]]}_{[[SEP]]} in high winds.
- Surfaces may become slick, so use caution if you’re outside.
- When driving into a hailstorm, find a safe place to pull over and turn your car so the hail is hitting the windshield. The safety glass will protect you. The hail could break the glass in other windows.

The largest hailstone ever documented weighed over 1.6 pounds and spanned 5.67 inches.

SOURCE: Nature’s Most Violent Storms, A Preparedness Guide, USDC, NOAA, NWS

Remember the devastating tornado that hit Fort Worth and Arlington in March of 2000? Five people were killed—two from the tornado, one from hail, and two from flash floods.

On May 5, 1995, an isolated severe thunderstorm developed ahead of an already intense squall line in Fort Worth and injured over 100 people. Cars were pummeled with grapefruit-sized hail, vegetation was totally stripped from the trees and shrubs, and rain poured down at a rate of as much as three inches in thirty minutes, causing massive flash flooding. The storm cost billions of dollars—a figure once reserved only for major hurricane damage, making this thunderstorm event by far the costliest in U.S. history.