

NATURAL DISASTERS

When You Find Yourself In One

Know how to deal with the hazards of such disasters as tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes. The techniques also apply to many other emergency situations, including some where nature isn't to blame.

Tornado

A tornado is a funnel-shaped cloud which may be spinning at 100 to 300 miles per hour when it touches the ground. "Tornado weather" is not, humid and stormy. Usually, tornadoes are products of severe thunderstorms. They are most frequent during the months of April, May and June in the southern, Midwestern and plains states. Listen to weather reports and watch for signs of developing storms. Tornadoes often strike with little warning.

If you sport a tornado, quickly stop your vehicle, get out and look for shelter a safe distance away. Tornadoes can move at over 70 miles per hour and can change course at any moment. If you are in a rural or open area, avoid trees and power or telephone lines. A ditch is an ideal refuge. Lie on your stomach and protect your head. Flying debris is the biggest danger. In urban areas, stay away from □long-span□ buildings such as shopping centers.

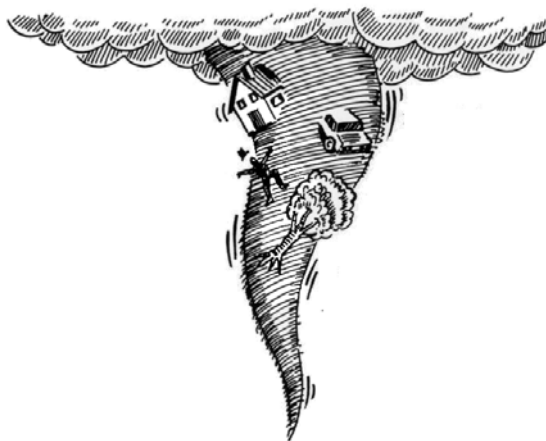
Hurricane

Hurricanes are violent storms with winds exceeding 70 mph. They bring lightning, heavy rains and tidal flooding. They are most frequent from June through November in the Atlantic and Gulf Coast states. But, unlike a tornado, a hurricane is somewhat predictable. They last for days and their paths are closely followed and reported by meteorologists.

Being caught in a hurricane can mean being right in the storm or driving into the edges or aftermath of the storm. If you are caught in the path of the storm, stop your vehicle and seek shelter. If you are away from buildings, lie flat on the driest spot and protect your head from flying debris. If you take shelter in a building, avoid windows and keep

away from electrical conductors, appliances, pipes and fixtures.

If you are driving in low-lying or coastal areas near the storm, flooding is a likely hazard. When faced with flooding roadways, try to park your vehicle on high ground, or make your way on foot to high ground.



Earthquake

Earthquakes cannot yet be predicted. They can happen anywhere, at any time. Most are minor earth tremors but some can be catastrophic. Landslides and tsunamis (rapid and extreme changes in the tides) may follow in seconds or hours after a quake.

If an earthquake starts while you are driving, stop your vehicle as soon as you can. Steer clear of bridges, overpasses and electric power lines. But stay in your vehicle. If there is any danger of debris landing in your vehicle, close your windows, duck down and shield your head with your jacket or hands.

In the Aftermath of Disasters

Natural disasters are yet another reason why a driver must know basic first aid procedures. Be prepared to provide rescue breathing, immobilize fractures and neck or spine injuries, control bleeding, maintain body heat and treat mild burns. Keep a first aid kit in your vehicle.

After a disaster hits, stay calm. Check your vehicle for leaks in your fuel lines and tanks. Inspect the coolant lines of refrigerated units. If necessary, disconnect electrical connections.

Telephone your home office as soon as you can. If there's extensive damage to roads and structures, you may be delayed for hours or even days.