



Virginia Department of Emergency Management

News Release

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VDEM Offers Safety Tips for Storm Recovery

RICHMOND, Va. – A line of severe thunderstorms with heavy winds affected many areas of Virginia Thursday, June 13, causing downed trees and widespread power outages. As residents clean up from the storm, here are important safety tips to follow:

Travel Safety

- Use caution while driving. Where traffic signals are not operating, treat the intersection as a four-way stop.
- Watch for storm debris, downed power lines and tree limbs on the roads.
- Watch for police who may be directing traffic as well as road and power crews who are cleaning debris and fixing power lines.
- Call 511 or go to www.511Virginia.org for 24/7 road condition information.

Electrical Safety

- Portable generators should only be run outside. Keep them at least 10 feet away from your home. Connect appliances directly to the generator. Never connect a portable generator to building wiring systems. Follow manufacturer's directions exactly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire.
- Don't use candles for light. Flashlights are safer when the power is out.
- Avoid loose or dangling electrical wires. All wires should be considered live. Even wires that normally would not hurt you, such as telephone or cable wires, could have come in contact with energized wires or equipment.

Food Safety

- Refrigerators will store food safely for up to four hours without power if the door is unopened.
- Freezers that are half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours without power; a full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours.
- Throw away any thawed food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. When in doubt, throw it out.

Chainsaw Safety

- Accidents during storm cleanup are frequent and often lead to severe injuries. Be especially careful while using chainsaws:
- Wear hard hat, safety glasses or goggles, hearing protection, leather work gloves, cut-resistant leg wear with two-inch boot overlap, and sturdy steel-toed boots.
- Make sure the chain brake is on when starting the saw, when both hands are not on the saw or when taking more than two steps.
- When starting the saw, place it on the ground and place the toe of your boot through the back handle to hold the saw down. Hold the front handle with your left hand; use your right hand to pull the start cord.
- Go to www.dof.virginia.gov for additional information and safety tips.

Personal Safety

- If you have medication that requires refrigeration but you lost power, check with the pharmacy on the label. They can advise if it still can be used.
- Empty outdoor containers, tarps and other items around your house that may be holding water from the storms. These create breeding sites for mosquitoes and other insects. Remember to use repellent when outside.
- During cleanup, avoid overexertion and strain in lifting and moving heavy objects or loads. Check with your locality to learn how to properly dispose of storm debris.

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