

What is the hazard?

Severe weather is an ongoing risk to Kentucky workers. Eleven workers lost their lives to lightning, tornados, and floods while working in Kentucky from 1994 through 2020. In December 2021, eight Kentucky workers were killed when a tornado hit the factory where they were working.



The following worker deaths due to severe weather occurred in Kentucky:

Case 1: Two workers, a manager (29-year-old) and a day laborer (25-year-old), were hanging tobacco in a barn when it began to storm. Lightning struck beams in the barn, killing both workers. Three additional workers in the barn were injured.

Case 2: A 48-year-old was driving a dump truck on a roadway while working as a construction contractor. A tornado swept the dump truck off the road, resulting in a vehicle rollover. The incident resulted in fatal blunt force trauma.

Case 3: A 45-year-old on-duty law enforcement officer called for a tow truck after his vehicle ran off the road. Soon after, the officer reported that his vehicle had been swept into floodwaters. Searchers located the officer's body approximately eight hours after the call.

Case 4: A 67-year-old farm owner was struck by lightning while installing a watering system for cattle. She was transported to the hospital and died three days later due to cardiac arrest.

Case 5: A 40-year-old taxi driver was working when his cab was submerged in flash floodwaters. He was unable to exit the vehicle and drowned. The area was under a flash flood warning.

Recommendations for employers on preventing injury during and after severe weather:

Stay aware of severe weather alerts and conditions in your area. Test your alarm systems regularly.

Develop an emergency plan to prepare for severe weather before it happens. Train workers on severe weather procedures. Conduct practice drills and maintain emergency supplies at your worksite.

Educate workers on the possible risks during severe weather response, including downed power lines, chemical exposure, fire, falls, and heat.

Ensure workers involved in response efforts have the necessary training and personal protective equipment.

Additional Resources

Name of Resource	Resource Description	Resource Link
Emergency Response Resources	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) guidance regarding natural disasters. Includes tornado, storm, and flood resources.	https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/natural.html
Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool	Occupational Safety and Health Administration online tool to help businesses implement an OSHA-compliant emergency action plan.	https://www.osha.gov/etools/evacuation-plans-procedures
Flood Preparedness and Response	Occupational Safety and Health Administration employer resources regarding floods.	https://www.osha.gov/flood/preparedness
Preparing the Workplace for Everyone: Accounting for the Needs of People with Disabilities	U.S. Department of Labor webpage provides links to several resources to assist employers in developing emergency plans that are appropriate for people with disabilities.	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employment-supports/emergency-preparedness
Tornado Preparedness and Response	Occupational Safety and Health Administration employer resources regarding tornados. Resource includes response/recovery guidance.	https://www.osha.gov/tornado/response

For additional training materials and information regarding KOSHS, please visit the program website at:

<https://kiprc.uky.edu/injury-focus-areas/occupational-safety-and-health>

Let us know what you think about this alert. Click [here](#) to complete our brief, anonymous survey.

Contact KOSHS:

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Acknowledgments:

Produced by the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance program, Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

The KOSHS program is funded by grant number 6U60OH008483-16 from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

