

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Hans Kallam. - Director



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GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS APRIL 19 – 25, 2009 SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN COLORADO

(DENVER) – Governor Bill Ritter has declared April 19 – 25, 2009, Colorado Severe Weather Awareness Week noting that, "...experience has demonstrated that a well-informed and prepared public...can reduce the loss of life and damage to property when threatened by Colorado's severe weather extremes."

Colorado Division of Emergency Management Director Hans Kallam stresses that preparedness begins with each of us. "This is an opportunity to educate people on severe weather threats and safety precautions. All the warnings and watches don't mean a thing if people don't know where to go for information, or how to respond to a tornado, or what actions should be taken in a flood situation. People need a plan of action and they need to know the appropriate safety precautions to react quickly in a severe weather emergency. Visit www.readycolorado.com."

Spring and summer in Colorado can bring severe storms which often produce damaging hail, extremely high winds, devastating tornadoes, and flash flooding. Thunderstorms and flooding in 1997 resulted in five fatalities in Fort Collins and a presidential disaster declaration for 13 counties. Intense thunderstorms in April of 1999 resulted in another presidential disaster declaration. Nationally, flash floods result in 146 deaths annually.

Hail has caused property and agricultural damage across the nation to the tune of almost \$1 billion. In July of 1990, Denver suffered an estimated \$625 million in damages from a single storm.

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Tornadoes cause an average of 70 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the United States each year.
9195 East Mineral Ave., Ste. 200, Centennial, Colorado 80112 PHONE (720) 852-6600 FAX (720) 852-6750

With 1,691 confirmed tornadoes, 2008 ranked as the second most active U.S. tornado season on record, only 2004 had more tornadoes with 1,817 confirmed tornadoes.

Windsor, Colorado experienced a tornado and hail storm in May 2008 causing an estimated \$147 million in insured losses. On May 22, 2008, a wide and powerful tornado swept north northwestward for 34 miles from northeast of Platteville in Weld County to seven miles east northeast of Fort Collins in Larimer County. The tornado was as wide as one mile at times along its path causing one death and damaging 850 homes. The National Weather Service rated this tornado a Category 3.

The March 2007 tornado that devastated the southeastern Colorado town of Holly had winds up to 165 mph as it cut a 15-mile swath of destruction through Prowers County. It was the first fatal tornado in Colorado since 1960, and only the second Category 3 tornado to hit southern Colorado since 1995. The path of damage was 600 feet wide.

Drought, extreme heat, landslides, lightning, and wildfires are also concerns in Colorado's climate. Coloradans can prepare for severe weather, help lessen the damage and destruction it causes, and help protect their lives and property if they are aware of precautions they can take before and during severe weather events.

The Colorado Division of Emergency Management is teaming with the National Weather Service and local emergency managers for this 2009 Severe Weather Awareness Week. For further information on what Coloradans can do to take responsibility and prepare for disasters, visit the Colorado Division of Emergency Management website at: <http://dola.colorado.gov/dem/> and click on "Severe Weather Awareness Week."

NOAA's National Weather Service websites have an abundance of severe weather information: NWS in Boulder: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/den/>; NWS in Grand Junction: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/gjt/>; NWS in Pueblo: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pub/>; and NWS in Goodland, Kansas: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/gld/> .