

SAFETY NOTE #4: MONSOON SAFETY

July 5, 2022

Welcome to **SAFETY NOTE #4!**

Wind, water, and dust --- Lightning --- flooded homes and streets!!! Washes become raging rivers! Rain in torrents, and the dreaded haboob is coming!!!

No, this is not an advertisement for the next big horror movie.... **IT'S just MONSOON Season in Southern Arizona!!!**

Attached you will find a **quick reference** providing **background and safety information** for this spectacular, transformational, and challenging time of year. Please take a moment to read this important information, then post it, pass it on and tell others how to safely enjoy the wonder of **Southern Arizona's Monsoon Season!!**

AS ALWAYS, BE conscious of safety in your work, with your team, and in your surroundings, including at home too!!

Your partner in safety,
Steward Observatory Executive Safety Committee
(astro-soscexecutive@list.arizona.edu)



Monsoon Safety

June 15th through September 30th has been defined as "The Monsoon."

Monsoon safety awareness can reduce the number of injuries and property damage caused by weather related dangers that occur during the monsoon.

Weather terms you'll hear:

- **A watch** means that severe weather has not occurred yet, but weather conditions are becoming highly volatile. Pay attention for ongoing news updates via TV, radio, or social media.
- **Warnings** (Severe Thunderstorm, Dust Storm) mean that life-threatening weather is about to occur, or has been reported. **Take action immediately.**
- **Flood Advisories** mean heavy rains will cause minor flooding of washes, streams, and flood-prone areas. If the flooding becomes life threatening, the advisory is upgraded to a **Flash Flood Warning**.



If it is stormy on the way to work or when it's time to leave, IT'S OK TO BE LATE! Don't risk injury. Slow down, stay safe.

DRIVE SAFE!



Driving around barricades is illegal and dangerous!!! Obey all road signs!

- Driving too fast through standing water can cause a car to hydroplane. Slow down or pull off the road (with the lights off) for a few minutes to wait out heavy rains.
- Never drive through flooded roadways.
- If a traffic signal is out, treat the intersection as a 4-way stop.
- As little as 10 inches of water can float average-sized vehicles. Strength of the flow is the critical force.

When in doubt, wait it out.

DUST STORMS (Habooobs)

If you see a dust storm approaching, **get indoors** to protect your eyes and lungs. Don't drive!

- If you encounter a dust storm while driving, pull off the road immediately. Turn off your headlights and taillights, put your vehicle in "park," and take your foot off the brake (so your brake lights are not illuminated.) Other motorists may tend to follow taillights in an attempt to get through the dust storm, and may strike your vehicle from behind.

Dust storms usually last a few minutes, and up to an hour at most. Stay where you are until the dust storm passes.



MICROBURSTS

Although microbursts are not as widely recognized as tornadoes, they can cause comparable, and in some cases, worse damage than some tornadoes. In fact, wind speeds as high as 150 mph are possible in extreme microburst cases. A tornado spirals, but a microburst is straight down with winds blowing rain "in sheets". Here is a link for an explanation and video of a microburst and the damage it can do.

The life span of a microburst is around 5-15 minutes and it only strikes up to a 2.5 mile area.

Get indoors. If you can't, beware of blowing debris. Winds that strong can blow over sheds and knock down large trees, branches, and power poles. Don't open doors because it can take a door off its hinges!

Be prepared at home - have these things on standby:

- **Three gallons** of water **FOR EACH PERSON AND PET** in clean, closed containers
- First aid kit
- A stock of food that requires no cooking or refrigeration
- Portable and working battery-operated radio, flashlights, and extra batteries (Candles and oil lamps are fire hazards)
- Necessary medications

Stay indoors and keep your pets indoors, too. It is the safest place for everyone.

