



Phillips County Emergency Management Newsletter



April 2026



Preparedness Starts Before the Emergency

As we move into April, northwest Kansas enters a season known for changing weather conditions and increased emergency risks. Spring brings welcome warmer temperatures, but it also marks the return of severe thunderstorms, wildfire concerns, and rapidly shifting weather patterns across our region.

Emergency Management works year-round with local fire departments, law enforcement, EMS, public works, and partner agencies to prepare for incidents that may affect our communities. While coordination among responders is essential, community preparedness remains one of the most important factors in reducing impacts during an emergency.

Living in a rural area presents unique challenges. Greater distances between towns, farms, and emergency resources mean individuals and families must often be ready to act before help arrives. Having a plan, maintaining emergency supplies, and staying informed through reliable weather alerts all contribute to safer outcomes.

April is an excellent time to review household emergency plans, check weather radios, and update disaster supply kits. Small preparedness steps taken now can make a significant difference when severe weather or other emergencies occur.

Preparedness is a shared responsibility. When individuals prepare their households, they help strengthen the resilience of the entire community. Emergency Management appreciates the continued support and cooperation of our residents as we work together to keep northwest Kansas safe.



The 1925 Tri-State Tornado (Missouri, Illinois, Indiana)

The [deadliest tornado in U.S. history](#) carved a 219-mile path of destruction, leveling entire towns and killing 695 people. Communities were blindsided with no warning systems in place, and the storm's speed nearly 70 mph—made survival nearly impossible.

How It Advanced Weather Forecasting

The disaster highlighted the need for better meteorological research and led to significant improvements in tornado forecasting and warning systems, a goal that has been pursued by studying historical tornadoes like the Tri-State event.

Every disaster tells two stories: one of loss and one of progress. The laws, safety codes, and relief systems that protect us today were often born from tragedy.



"Rise like the sun after every storm."

Spring Severe Weather Preparedness — Know Your Plan Before the Storm

April marks the beginning of peak severe weather season across Kansas. Thunderstorms, large hail, damaging winds, and tornadoes can develop quickly, often with limited warning time. Preparing before storms occur is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and your family.

Residents should first identify where they will take shelter during severe weather. The safest location is a basement or storm shelter. If neither is available, move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building, away from windows. Mobile homes and vehicles are not safe during tornado warnings, and alternate shelter locations should be planned in advance.

Ensure you have multiple ways to receive weather alerts. A NOAA Weather Radio, local alert systems, and trusted mobile weather apps provide redundancy if power or cell service becomes unreliable. Do not rely on outdoor warning sirens alone, as they are designed to alert people outdoors.



“Wind advisory? More like daily life advisory in northwest Kansas.”

Did you know?

Thunderstorm Power: A single Kansas thunderstorm can release more energy in 10 minutes than all the energy consumed in the United States in a day.

Lightning Strikes: Kansas averages about 1.2 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes every year. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from a storm.

Wind Gusts: Severe storms in the High Plains can produce straight-line winds exceeding 80 mph, strong enough to knock down trees, power lines, and outbuildings.

Strengthen your Financial Preparedness.

If a disaster or other emergency strikes your community, you may only have seconds or minutes to react. In those critical moments, your focus will be on your family’s safety. Once the threat of harm has passed, having your homeowners or renters’ insurance policy, bank account information, and other household records and contacts will be very important as you begin the recovery process. The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) can help you be ready. Prioritize financial preparedness by gathering important documents.

Take pictures or scan.

Put them in a waterproof and fireproof container.

The EFFAK includes checklists of important documents and forms to capture information vital for disaster recovery that fall into the following four categories:

- Household Identification (Deeds and Proof of Ownership)
- Financial and Legal Documentation (Social Security Cards)
- Insurance Policies,
- Birth Certificates and/or Marriage Certificates
- Medical Information (Health Cards/records)
- Household Contacts (List of Important Numbers)

