

Beyond the Storm:

Spotters & Chasers Helping with Communities and First Response



Shawna Davies, Trimble/Kansas City MO

Shawna Davies – Storm Chaser

About the presenter:

- An avid Storm Chaser for over 10 years
- Certified in Adult / Infant / Child CPR with AED, and First Aid
- Certified in Douglas County, KS for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)



Storm spotting and first response:



- *Why should I help?*
- *How can I help?*
- *When is it appropriate to stay out of the way?*
- *Is there liability involved if I help an injured person?*
- *Where can I receive proper training to help in a disaster?*

Why should I help?

Less than 1 percent of the U.S. population is an emergency responder.

Which means:

- 1 firefighter for every 265 people
- 1 sworn officer for every 334 people
- 1 EMT / paramedic for every 325 people

Emergency responders can easily become overwhelmed in a disaster situation that devastates one or more towns and especially a metropolitan city.

If and when this occurs, ordinary citizens can be a valuable asset to help save lives!

How can I help?

- Obtain proper training in first response and first aid.
- Carry specific gear with you that could be of use either by you or a first responder.
- Ask police or first responders how I can help in a specific disaster situation.
 - *If you have no first response training, you can still help...*
 - *Supplies and transport for injured people are what is most needed in disaster situations !*

Is there liability involved if I help an injured person?

The **Good Samaritan doctrine** encourages emergency assistance by removing the threat of liability for damage done by the assistance.

However, the assistance must be reasonable: a rescuer cannot benefit from the Good Samaritan doctrine if the assistance is **reckless** or **grossly negligent**.

The key point: Ask any injured and conscious person if you can help them. If they say "no" and you still perform medical acts of assistance, then you are not protected.

*If an injured person is unconscious, then you may help them without consent. This is called "**Implied Consent**".*

Tips on helping an injured person in regards to liability and the Good Samaritan Law:

- Seek professional training for CPR and First Aid through the American Red Cross, CERT, or other first responder courses.
- **Always** ask a conscious injured person if you can help them before applying any medical assistance.
- Assess the situation before you move an injured person. Only move someone if their life is in immediate danger (such as fire, flood waters, or threat of building collapse). Otherwise, it's best to let well-trained first responders move the victim.

When should I get out of the way?

Sometimes you could be more of a hindrance than an asset in a crisis situation. Assess each situation by asking yourself the following questions:

- *How bad is the situation?*
- *Are first responders already on the scene, and do there seem to be enough for the scale of the disaster?*
- *Are there a lot of bystanders clogging traffic, and am I one of them?*



Where can I find first responder and first aid training?



The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is available in many counties nationwide, and educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. It also trains people in basic disaster response skills.

C.E.R.T. Classes 8 Week Course Schedule:

- CERT Introduction / CERT Organization
- Disaster Fire Safety
- **Disaster Medical Operations Part 1**
- **Disaster Medical Operations Part 2**
- **Light Search & Rescue Operations**
- Disaster Preparedness
- **Disaster Psychology** / Terrorism and CERT
- Course Review and Disaster Simulation

* The classes above are from Douglas County fall 2008 CERT training


Disaster Medical Operations Part 1:

How to identify and treat the 3 "Killers":

- **A**irway **o**bstruction
- **E**xcessive **B**leeding
- **C**ontrol **S**hock

(Also known as the "**ABC**" killers)

The **START** concept – Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment



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Disaster Medical Operations Part 2:

- Organization of disaster medical operations
- Conducting victim assessments
- Establishing treatment areas
- Treating injuries (burns, cuts, broken bones)
- Public health concerns



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Light Search and Rescue Operations:

- **Search and Rescue Size Up:** How to size up the situation in which the search and rescue teams will operate
- **Conducting Search Operations:** How to search systematically for disaster victims
- **Conducting Rescue Operations:** Safe techniques for lifting, leveraging, cribbing, and victim removal

Disaster Psychology

- **Disaster Psychology:** The psychological impact of a disaster on rescuers and victims, and how to provide "psychological first aid".
- **Caring for Yourself and Your Buddy:** Steps one can take for psychological care before, immediately following, and after a disaster.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Psychological symptoms:

- Irritability or anger
- Self-blame or the blaming of others
- Isolation and withdrawal
- Feeling stunned, numb, or overwhelmed
- Feeling helpless
- Mood swings
- Sadness, depression, and or grief
- Denial
- Concentration and memory problems
- Relationship conflicts / marital discord

Physiological Symptoms:

- Loss of appetite
- Headaches or chest pain
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, or nausea
- Hyperactivity
- Increase in alcohol or drug consumption
- Nightmares
- Inability to sleep
- Fatigue or low energy

To find a CERT program near you:
www.citizencorps.gov/cert
(click on "State Directory")
This training is FREE!

American Red Cross CPR / First Aid Training



The Red Cross offers an assortment of classes such as:

- CPR (Adult / Child / Infant + AED training)
 - First Aid
- Community Disaster Education

www.redcross.org

First Response and spotters/chasers:
Gear to have on hand / Supplies that can help

- First aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Towels
- Blankets
- Bottled water
- Flares
- Duct tape
- Adjustable wrench (to turn off gas valves)
- Whistle
- Shovel and crowbar
- Hard hat
- Latex gloves (if you plan going to help injured people)
- Shoes with thick soles to avoid foot injuries from nails
- Toys or stuffed animals to help calm kids down
- Extra gauze or gauze tape (to help people who are bleeding)
- Plastic bags or large zip lock bags (for bio-hazard items)

Helping with Communities



There's much that we as storm spotters and storm chasers can do to help educate the public about severe weather awareness and preparedness.

You may think that in today's information-filled world, people know all about severe weather awareness and safety.

But that's not always the case!

Informal Survey Synopsis

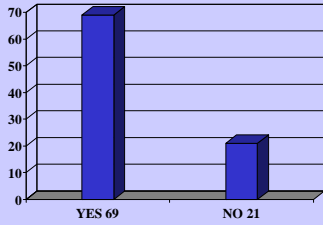
Ninety (90) total adults from the Kansas City, Wichita, and Houston areas were surveyed just to get a rough idea what people in the central U.S. might know about severe weather.

- 20 questions, multiple choice -

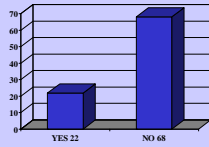
The survey was only informal, but here are some interesting results...

(You can see the full survey and results at our vendor table)

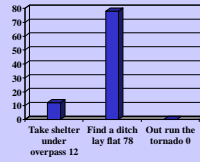
Q: Can a storm produce a tornado if it has a severe thunderstorm warning?



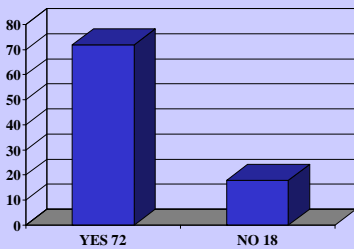
Q: You should open all of your windows before taking shelter to equalize the pressure of your house if a tornado is coming:



Q: If you are driving and see a tornado approaching nearby, but no sturdy roadside buildings are available for you to take shelter, you should:



Q: If a storm spotter or storm chaser were to visit your work, church, or neighborhood association to give a presentation about severe weather and preparedness, would you be interested in attending?



Severe Weather Education

Give talks about severe weather and safety to:

- Schools
- Home Associations
- Work
- Church
- Nursing Homes



Other Ways to Contribute

- Volunteer time with community Skywarn, CERT, Red Cross, etc.
- Befriend and advise new spotters and chasers to be knowledgeable and responsible
- Befriend and encourage kids interested in weather and science

Severe weather talks – what you can talk about:

- Most people are interested in storms and tornadoes.
- Use your video and pictures to get people's attention to learn more about severe weather.
- Explain what spotters and chasers do and how it is useful (reports to NWS, spotter training, etc.).
- Discuss how important it is to take responsibility about being aware of severe weather.
- Talk specifically about ways to stay informed and where to go to stay safe in a variety of situations.
- Tailor your talk to your audience – when talking to kids, simplify and keep it kid-friendly.

Use pictures and video to get people's attention about staying aware and safe in severe weather.



Gary & Kimberly Whitlow

An example...



**Pratt County
KS tornado
deaths
on the road
5/23/08**

Severe weather talks – what not to say:

- Don't get "technical" - most people won't understand and will zone out.
- Don't promote the "adrenaline junkie" factor when talking about storms!
- Don't do a talk tailored for adults when presenting to kids.

Wrap up

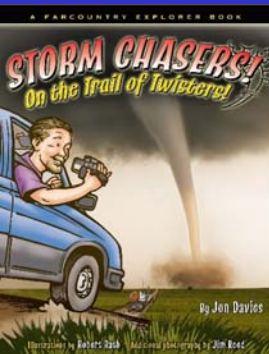
- As storm spotters and storm chasers, we can all help in a variety of ways, depending on our comfort level, knowledge and training.
- In first response situations, those with no training can help with supplies and transportation (such as driving injured to medical care facilities).
- CERT and Red Cross provide training for those who want to be more involved.

Wrap up

- We can also help by giving talks and presentations on severe weather awareness and safety to local schools, home associations, etc.
- There are many ways to volunteer, from donating video for good causes, to helping with local Skywarn, CERT, Red Cross, etc.
- You can also encourage new spotters and chasers, and kids interested in science, helping them to learn and be responsible.

Good luck and stay safe in 2009!

www.citizencorps.gov/cert
www.redcross.org



A great book for kids
ages 7-13
to learn about chasers,
spotters, & severe weather
by Jon & Shawna Davies

Available from:
Amazon.com

(Search "Jon Davies")
