

If you are driving:

- Keep both hands on the wheel and slow down.
- Watch for objects blowing across the roadway and into your path.
- Keep a safe distance from cars in adjacent lanes, as strong gusts could push a car outside its lane of travel.
- High-profile vehicles such as trucks, vans, SUVs, or vehicles towing a trailer are more prone to being pushed or flipped by high wind gusts.
- If winds are severe enough to prevent safe driving, safely pull over onto the shoulder of the road and stop.



High winds damage Cohen Stadium
Photo courtesy of KFOXTV.com 2009

For More Information

Please contact the following agencies for more information about protecting your family from natural hazards:

Doña Ana County Local Emergency Planning Committee - www.donaanalepc.org

Office of Emergency Management
www.donaanacounty.org/emergency
1170 North Solano, Suite O
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 647-7900

Doña Ana County Flood Commission
845 North Motel Boulevard
Las Cruces, NM 88007
(575) 525-5558
www.donaanacounty.org/flood/

Elephant Butte Irrigation District
(575) 526-6671
www.ebid-nm.org/

City of Las Cruces Public Works Dept.
Engineering Services
(575) 528-3131
www.las-cruces.org/public_works/

New Mexico Department of Transportation
Roadway Conditions 1-800-432-4269
<http://www.nmroads.com/>

National Weather Service El Paso/Santa Teresa
www.srh.noaa.gov/epz

American Red Cross
Southwest New Mexico Chapter
1301 East Griggs Avenue
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 526-2631
www.redcross.org

Unless otherwise noted, the information in this brochure has been adapted from NOAA's National Weather Service, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the Doña Ana County Flood Commission.

May 2010

High Winds

NATURAL HAZARDS Of Southern New Mexico

High Winds

In Southern New Mexico, high winds usually occur in March and April, signaling the start of spring. Often high winds return during the autumn months as well. Typically, winds strengthen in the late morning through the early afternoon with strong gusts throughout the day and into the evening.

When winds reach 30 miles per hour with wind gusts over 50 miles per hour, they have the potential to bring down trees, power lines and signs, and can turn unsecured objects into dangerous projectiles.

High winds can create dust storms which may be miles long and several thousand feet high. Dust storms contain dust and debris greatly reducing visibility and making it difficult to breathe.

Terms Describing Wind Speed

- **LIGHT** or **LIGHT AND VARIABLE**
0 to 5 mph
- **GENTLE BREEZE** - 5 to 15 mph
- **BREEZY, BRISK, BLUSTERY**
15 to 25 mph

- **WINDY** - 20 to 30 mph
- **VERY WINDY** - 30 to 40 mph
- **STRONG, DANGEROUS, HIGH**
40 mph or greater
- **HIGH WIND WARNING** - Issued for sustained winds of 40 mph or more for 1 hour, or wind gusts 58 mph or greater.

If you are caught outside during high winds:

- Take cover next to a building or under a secure shelter.
- Stand clear of roadways or train tracks, as a gust may blow you into the path of an oncoming vehicle.
- Use handrails where available, and avoid elevated areas such as roofs.
- Watch for flying debris. Tree limbs may break and street signs may come loose during strong winds.

In the event of a downed power line:

- Report downed lines to 911.
- Avoid anything that may be touching downed lines, including vehicles or tree branches.
- If a line falls on your car, stay inside the vehicle. Do not touch the metal frame of your vehicle.
- Warn anyone who may approach of the downed power line. Ask someone to call the police. Do not exit the car until help arrives.
- If the car catches fire, open the door and jump clear of the vehicle.



Dust storm in Las Cruces; Source of photo unknown