Driving Safely in a Dust Storm

- If possible, avoid the dust storm area.
- Never stop on the traveled portion of the roadway.
 - Pull your vehicle off the pavement as far as possible.
 - Stop, turn off lights, set the emergency brake.
 - Take your foot off of the brake pedal to be sure the tail lights are not illuminated.
- If you cannot pull off the roadway, proceed at a speed suitable for visibility.
 - Turn on lights and sound horn occasionally.
 - Use the painted center line to help guide you.
 - Look for a safe place to pull off the roadway.



Dust storm on Interstate 10, March 2008 Photo by Orlando Fierro, Doña Ana County Flood Commission

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 (575) 647-7900 1170 North Solano, Suite O Las Cruces, NM 88001

Doña Ana County Flood Commission <u>www.donaanacounty.org/flood</u> (575) 525-5558

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

City of Las Cruces Public Works Dept. (575) 528-3131

www.las-cruces.org/Departments/public% 20works.aspx

NM Department of Transportation Roadway Conditions http://www.nmroads.com

1-800-432-4269

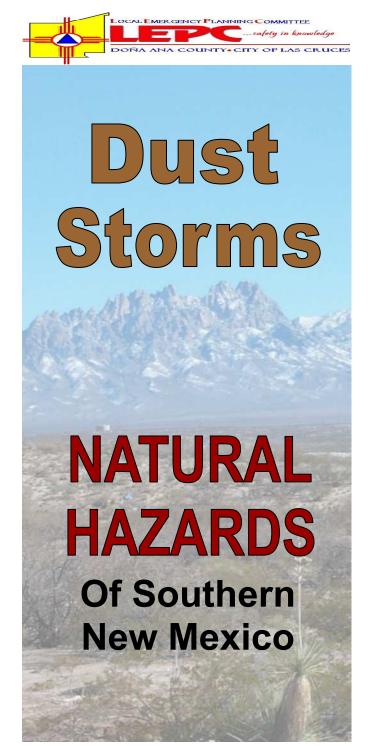
National Weather Service El Paso/Santa Teresa

www.srh.noaa.gov/epz

American Red Cross Southwest New Mexico Chapter www.redcrossnewmexico.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.

January 2012



Prepared by the Natural Hazards Committee

Dust Storms

A dust storm usually arrives suddenly in the form of an advancing wall of dust and debris which may be miles long and several thousand feet high. This occurs when high winds raise large amounts of dust from areas of dry, loose, exposed soil. They can strike with little warning, reducing visibility and making it difficult to breathe.

Blinding, choking dust also can quickly make driving conditions hazardous, causing accidents that may involve chain collisions. Dust storms usually last only a few minutes, but the actions a motorist takes during the storm may be the most important of his or her life.

Terms Describing Wind Speed and Dust Storms

- 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.
- BLOWING DUST ADVISORY
 Issued when widespread visibilities are at or below 1 mile but above 1/4 mile due to blowing dust for any extended period of time.
- DUST STORM (or SAND STORM)
 WARNING Visibility of 1/4 mile or less due to blowing dust or sand, and wind speeds of 30

Health

miles an hour

or more.

Concerns and Precautions

Dust irritates the lungs and can trigger allergic reactions, as well as asthma attacks. Dust can cause coughing, wheezing, runny noses, and irritated eyes.

Some groups of people, such as infants, pregnant women, and seniors are more sensitive to dust than others. Breathing a lot of dust over a long period of time can cause chronic breathing and lung problems.

The best precaution is simply to avoid going outside during severe dust storms. If you must go out, spend as little time outside as possible. Wearing some type of covering over your nose and mouth can provide some protection from large particles. However, since the small dust particles are the most harmful, staying out of the dust is the best solution.



Dust storm across Las Cruces; Photo by Tobe Turpen, May 2004