If you are approached by the media regarding a reported severe storm health risk in your jurisdiction, the following talking points may be used. Start with message A1 or A2, then follow the instructions within that box.

**A1**
We were notified by the medical examiner/coroner about a fatality possibly due to extreme weather conditions. Our condolences go out to the family.

*Go to message B1 or B2.*

**A2**
We have not been notified of any recent fatalities linked to severe storm conditions.

*Go to message C.*

**B1**
Out of respect for the family, we are unable to share any details.

*Go to message C.*

**B2**
On [insert date], a [gender] [“____ years old” or “between the ages of ____ and ___”] died during the storm.

*Go to message C.*

**C**
The after-effects of a severe storm can result in many adverse health effects. Please remain safe by:

a. Listening to safety messages of response teams that are assessing the damage.

b. Checking on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone, or who are more likely to be affected by severe storms.

c. For more information visit [insert relevant website].
Message mapping is one of the most important risk communication tools that public health agencies can employ. The goal of a message map is to convey important information in a concise and easy to understand fashion.

**General Guidelines for Completing a Message Map**

- Stick to three key messages or one key message with three parts for each underlying concern or specific question.
- Keep key messages brief. The reader should ideally spend less than 10 seconds per line.
- Develop messages that are easily understood by the target audience. (For communications with the general public, use a 6th to 8th grade readability level.)
- Place messages within a message set. The most important messages should occupy the first and last positions.
- Develop key messages that cite credible third parties.
- Use graphics and other visual aids to enhance key messages.
- Keep a positive tone. Messages should be solution oriented and constructive. Try to balance negative messages with positive ones.
- Avoid unnecessary use of “absolute” words, such as no, not, never, nothing, and none.
The following is a message map that could be used when addressing the general public regarding severe storm safety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Messages</th>
<th>Supporting Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Three key messages</em></td>
<td><em>Three pieces of supporting information for each key message</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Message 1** | **Supporting Info 1**  
Severe storms can come with little warning. Follow your local radio stations and news channels for up-to-date information on incoming storms.  
**Supporting Info 2**  
Heed storm watches in our area, and take appropriate shelter when storm watches turn into storm warnings.  
**Supporting Info 3**  
Acting quickly and being informed on weather patterns in your area are important steps in being prepared. |
| **Message 2** | **Supporting Info 1**  
Find an area in your home where your family can take shelter during severe storms. These rooms should have no windows to the outside.  
**Supporting Info 2**  
Identify two different ways to exit the house, should the need occur. Be sure to practice with your family.  
**Supporting Info 3**  
Develop an emergency communication plan, with important phone numbers and information. These include: medical and emergency contacts, work and school information, and insurance information. |
| **Message 3** | **Supporting Info 1**  
People with limited mobility, those who live alone, the elderly, and children may be more vulnerable to injury during severe weather.  
**Supporting Info 2**  
Mental health can be affected during and after severe weather. Stay calm and follow your family’s emergency plan.  
**Supporting Info 3**  
Call 911 or seek medical attention if you or someone you know has been injured. |