

Tornado Fact Sheet

When a tornado is coming, you have only a short amount of time to make life-or-death decisions. Advance planning and quick response are the keys to survive a tornado.

Develop an Emergency Communication Plan

In case family members are separated from one another during a tornado (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the family contact. After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

Have Disaster Supplies On Hand:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and water
- Non-electric can opener
- Essential Medicines
- Cash and Credit Cards
- Sturdy Shoes



Tornado Watches and Warnings

A tornado watch is issued by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. This is the time to remind family members where the safest places within your home are located, and listen to the radio or television for further developments.

A tornado warning is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety. Turn on a battery-operated radio and wait for further instructions.

Tornado Danger Signs

Look Out For:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Wall Cloud
- Large Hail
- Loud roar; similar to a freight train

Caution:

- Some tornadoes appear as a visible funnel extending only partially to the ground.
- Look for signs of debris below the visible funnel.
- Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while others are obscured by rain or nearby low-hanging clouds.
- Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still.
- An approaching cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible.
- Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

Mobile Homes

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable. A mobile home can overturn very easily even if precautions have been taken to tie down the unit. When a tornado warning is issued, take shelter in a building with a strong foundation. If a shelter is not available, lie in a ditch or low-lying area a safe distance away from the unit.

If At Home during a tornado:

- Go at once to the basement, storm cellar, or the lowest level of the building.
- If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or a small inner room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet.
- Get away from windows.
- Go to the "Center" of the room. Stay away from corners because they tend to attract debris.
- Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table and hold on to it.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.
- If in a mobile home, get out and find shelter elsewhere.

If at Work or School

- Go to the basement or to an inside hallway at the lowest level.
- Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways, or shopping malls.
- Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.

If Outdoors

- If possible, get inside a building.
- If shelter is not available, or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building. Be aware of the potential for flooding.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.

If In A Car

- Never try to outdrive a tornado in a car or truck. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift up a car or truck and toss it through the air.
- Get out of the car immediately and take shelter in a nearby building.
- If there is no time to get indoors, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

After

- Give first aid when appropriate. Don't try to move the seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- Turn on the radio or television to get the latest emergency information.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches or gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Leave the building if you smell gas or chemical fumes.
- Take pictures of the damage - both to the house - and its contents - for insurance purposes.

Remember to Help your Neighbors who may require special assistance - infants, the elderly, and people with disabilities.