

# Tornado Safety Tips



Tornados are violent and erratic storms. A tornado can travel for miles along the ground, lift, suddenly change direction, and strike again. This brochure will describe actions you can take to protect yourself and your family during a tornado.

## **Keep alert to changing weather conditions.**

Tornadoes are formed by severe thunderstorms, most frequently in the spring and summer. If you live in tornado-prone area, stay alert during severe weather.

Know your community's warning signals. Most often warnings will be given by outdoor warning systems, local radio, television stations and by NOAA Weather Radio. Know what kind of warning systems your community has.

## **A Tornado Watch**

A **Tornado Watch** simply means the conditions are favorable for a tornado to develop; for example, during severe thunderstorms. Tornadoes are most likely to happen in the late afternoon on hot spring or summer days. However, tornadoes can occur at anytime – day or night, in any month.

### **What can I do?**

- Keep an eye on the weather and be prepared to take shelter immediately if conditions deteriorate.
- Move your vehicle inside a garage or carport to avoid damage from hail that often accompanies severe storms.
- Move lawn furniture and yard equipment inside, if time permits. These items can become damaged or become projectiles which can damage your home.
- If you are at home, keep your radio and/or television turned to weather reports and account for all family members.



A **Tornado Warning** is issued when a tornado funnel has been sighted or located by weather radar. You should **Take Shelter Immediately**. Because tornadoes form and move quickly, there may not be time for a warning. That is why it is important to stay alert to weather conditions during severe storms.

Although there is no guaranteed safe place during a tornado, some locations are better than others. By following these suggested safety tips, you can increase your chances for survival.

# Where Do I Take Shelter



**At Home**



## What can I do? -

- **Seek shelter immediately!**
- **Avoid head trauma, get under something sturdy.**

Always cover your head and body, if possible cover yourself with a blanket or a sleeping bag. If nothing else is available protect your head with your hands.

Protect your head from falling ceilings tiles or other flying objects that could injure or kill you.

- **Avoid windows** – flying glass can injure or kill. Don't open windows. Houses don't explode, and allowing strong winds inside your house can cause damage and injury to people inside.

## Where do I go?

**Basement or cellars** –The safest place to be in your home is underground (basement) preferably under something sturdy like a work bench or table. Make sure the basement table is not directly under something heavy like a piano or a refrigerator on the floor above.

**Interior room with no windows**—If you don't have a basement, go to an **interior room with no windows on the lowest floor**. This room may be a bathroom, hallway or a closet. If you go to the bathroom, **climb inside a metal, not plastic, bathtub** for added protection. Cover your head. Remember, the more walls between you and the outside the better.

## In a Mobile Home

### What can I do?

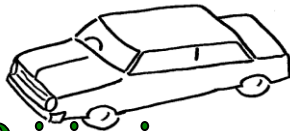
- **Plan ahead.** Make arrangements to stay with friends or neighbors who have basements.
- **Seek conventional shelter when a tornado warning is issued.**
- Encourage your mobile home community to **build a block & brick community tornado shelter.**

## Where do I go?

**Go to a designated shelter.** Leave your mobile home at the first signs of severe weather. Remember mobile homes are vulnerable to damage from high winds even if they are tied down.

**Do not stay in a mobile home,** even those with tie downs.

If there is no shelter in the park or there is not enough time to reach friends or family, **lie flat in a ditch or ravine and put your hands over your head.** Don't take shelter under your home.



## Driving in your Car

**Never try to outrun a tornado** – a tornado is so erratic, it may change directions several times while you are trying to outrun it.

**I you see a funnel cloud, get out of your vehicle immediately.** Cars, trucks and buses can be tossed around like toys by a tornado.

**Seek shelter in a building, nearby ditch or ravine.**

Do not seek shelter underneath your vehicle. Lie flat and put your hands over your head and neck.

**Be alert for flash flooding in ditches or ravines**

# At Shopping Malls, Stores, Theaters

Long span buildings, such as shopping malls, civic centers, indoor pools, theaters or gymnasium, are dangerous because the entire structure is supported solely by the outside walls. The inside walls are usually false or non-load bearing walls.

**Where do I go?** Avoid area with glass. If possible go to the restrooms. Restrooms usually made of concrete blocks, along with the plumbing and metal support structure, are designed to keep falling debris from crushing the restroom. If there is no time to get to a space inside the restroom, get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. You can get up against heavy shelving or counters in a store, or under seats in a theater. Remember “Protect Your Head!”

# Schools, Hospitals, Office Buildings

Take extra precaution when a tornado strikes and you are in a public or office building. Not only is there a large concentration of people in a small area, but these buildings have large amount of glass on the outside walls.

**Where do I go?** Avoid windows, glass doorways, auditoriums, cafeteria or gymnasiums. If a specific area does not exist, move to interior hallways or small rooms on the building’s lowest floor. Protect your head and make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down. If you are in a small room, get under a desk and protect your head.

# If You Are In The Open

**What do I do?** If you are outside during a tornado, lie in a gully, ditch or low spot. Since rain usually accompanies a tornado, be aware of flash flooding conditions and be prepared to move out of the ditch or low spot quickly. Protect your body by curling into a ball and cover your head. Do not go into a grove of trees or under your vehicle.

Don’t enter damaged buildings – they might collapse. Wait for help before you start searching for victims. If your house appears undamaged, check gas and utility lines for breaks before you enter your home. If the lights are off, use a flashlight. Do not use a match, lighter or any open flame when the lights are off – this could cause an explosion if you have a gas leak.

# Remember

**A Tornado Watch** – means conditions are favorable for a tornado to develop.

**A Tornado Warning** – means a tornado has been sighted. Seek shelter immediately!

Don’t wait until emergency sirens are sounding to start grabbing supplies. Plan ahead to protect yourself and your family.