

Tornadoes

If a tornado is imminent:

In a car or truck, or outdoors:

Get out of the car and into a sturdy building. If in open country, run to low ground away from any cars or other movable objects (trees, power lines, large rocks, etc) that may move and fall on you. Lie flat, with your hand protecting the back of your head.

Avoid seeking shelter under bridges – it can create traffic hazards and under the bridge may involve greater danger and pressure differentials than staying in the open.

In a public building:

In a large public building (retail store, church, library), move to the lowest possible level, in a room without windows, i.e. a bathroom or storage closet. When in a building with things that may become dangerous projectiles (library, etc), take that into account when hiding. Watch out for other persons who may panic and become dangerous.

In your home:

Follow the same precautions about lower floors and no windows, but because you know the environment, you should have a room picked out and hopefully supplied with basic necessities – bottled water, some food, etc.

Don't forget about your pets, children, and elderly persons – if you have time, find them and bring them with you.

Tornado Damage:

After a tornado incident, stay put until you are certain the tornado threat is gone. Check your internet or on your smartphone or portable radio for the latest updates.

After the tornado, meet your loved ones in whatever prearranged location you have chosen.

If this is near the site of tornado activity, or you have to wait for assistance there, be careful of downed electrical lines (and puddles near them), any thing that may be perched haphazardly by the tornado (i.e. a car in a tree) or broken and has the potential to damage skin.

Stay out of buildings affected by the tornado – they could collapse. Do not use open flame, in case of natural gas line ruptures.

If there is flooding, follow flood safety guidelines, and never enter water if you don't know how deep or fast it is.

Cleanup:

Cleaning up a building after a tornado can be an extensive process. The building may need to be levelled entirely. Be cautious looking for belongings, people, or pets in damaged buildings. Wear protective gear like sturdy shoes and pants, gloves, and long sleeves.

As in any disaster, the psychological affects may be long term and require more after care by trained mental health professionals. Keep a close eye on children, and get them help if needed.



PLACE YOUR TOWN INFORMATION HERE

What causes a tornado?

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending between, and in contact with, a cloud and the surface of the air. They are generally spawned by thunderstorms, but they have been known to occur without the presence of lightning. The strongest tornados can reach over 300 miles per hour windspeeds.

Tornado windspeeds are estimated after the fact by an assessment of the damage done versus set examples of windspeed damages.

The US has the highest incidence of tornadoes reported annually, at over 1000 a year. This is due to the geography of “Tornado Alley” in the Midwest, where most of these incidents occur. Polar air from Canada, tropical air from Mexico, and dry air from the desert air meet here, and spawn the sort of thunderstorms that tend to spawn these air formations.

They can come one at a time, or in clusters, and range in size; they can leave paths 50 meters to a mile wide. They have been known to touch down more than once over their lifespan, and can last from a few seconds to an hour or more.

They are unpredictable – the weather immediately preceding can be calm or wildly gusty, and either sunny or rainy.

They can make a sound like a jet engine – but there is no guarantee you will hear this sound before it’s too late to flee, if it makes it at all.

Fujita Tornado Scale

Scale	Wind Speed Estimate	Typical Damage
F0	<73	Light: chimneys, branches, signboards damaged.
F1	73 – 112	Moderate: peeled surface on roofs, mobile homes overturned
F2	113-157	Considerable: roofs torn off, mobile homes demolished
F3	158-206	Severe: trees uprooted, houses severely damaged, cars thrown around
F4	207-260	Devastating: houses levelled, foundations gone
F5	261-318	Incredible: whole neighborhoods demolished

In the US, tornado season is typically concentrated in the springtime, from April to July. But tornados can happen during the right weather conditions at any time of the year, and in any location.

Be alert is a tornado watch is declared for your area. Know where your pets and loved ones are, and keep them close to safety if possible.

Tornado Watch System:

In the US, the National Weather Service provides alerts of weather conditions. There are two relevant for tornadoes. A **Tornado Watch** means that there are storms in the area that are conducive to the development of tornadoes. A **Tornado Warning** is when a tornado has been spotted on the ground or by radar, and is occurring or imminent in the watch area.

While tornadoes can and do still occur without these alerts being active, advances in science and technology have greatly increased the ability of meteorologists to provide advance notice to the public.

If you get caught in a place and a tornado is coming towards you, do not panic.

If in a car or mobile home that you do not have sufficient distance to drive away from the tornado, leave. It is better to be outdoors than in one of these structures. Go to a sturdy building if possible, or lie down and protect your head.

If in a building, go to an internal room with no windows if possible. Cover yourself with a mattress or blankets to protect from debris. Make your way down an interior stairwell if possible, and do not take the elevator. You do not want to be trapped there if power cuts out.

Help others who may be less able to help themselves – if the situation was reversed you would want to be helped, right?