

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Learn the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning

A Tornado Watch indicates that conditions are right for a tornado to develop and that the sky should be watched. Be alert to changing weather conditions.

A Tornado Warning indicates a tornado has been sighted or that radar indicates one has developed or could develop within minutes. Warnings will give the location of the tornado and the area immediately affected by the warning. When a warning is issued, move **quickly** to shelter.



Immediate Dangers -- The immediate threat from tornadoes is danger to life and property from violently whirling winds and debris hurled through the air by the winds. Wind speeds in tornadoes can exceed 250 mph.

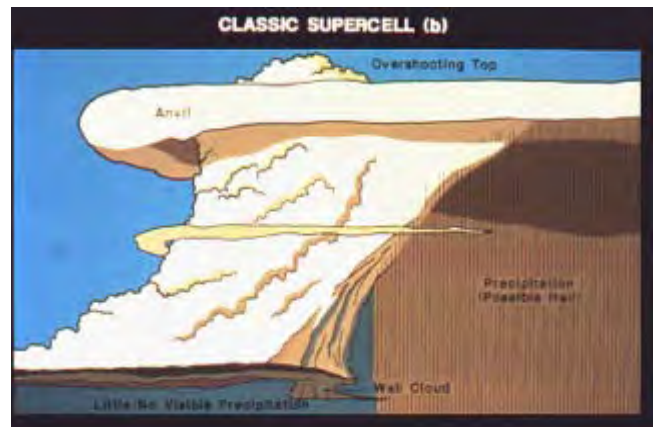
Long-Term Dangers -- Long-term risks include the possibility of building collapse, fallen trees and power lines, broken gas lines, broken sewer and water mains, and the outbreak of fires. Agricultural crops and industries may be damaged or destroyed.

What to do BEFORE a Tornado

Designate a location for shelter. Have a disaster supply kit on hand containing:

- First aid kit with essential medications
- Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries
- At least a three-day supply of food and water
- Various tools and supplies including a non-electric can opener
- Sturdy shoes and work gloves
- Cash/credit cards
- Copy of important family documents

Know what a tornado watch and warning mean. Listen to local radio/TV stations or NOAA weather radio for weather information.



Develop a family communications plan. In case family members are separated during a disaster, 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 is often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of that contact person.

During a Tornado

- If at home, go to a basement or storm cellar, away from windows. If neither a basement or storm cellar is available, find shelter under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a work bench or heavy table and hold on to it. Use arms to protect head and neck.
- If at work or school, go to the basement or inside hallway at the lowest level. Avoid rooms such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias or large hallways.

- If outdoors, get inside a building, if possible. If unable to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area Use arms to protect head and neck and stay low to the ground. *Remember: If you are in a ditch or low-lying area, be alert for flash floods that often accompany tornadoes.*
- If in a vehicle, **never** try to outrun a tornado. Get out of the vehicle immediately and take shelter in a nearby building. If there is no time to go indoors, get out of the vehicle and lie in a ditch or low-lying area between the vehicle and the tornado. Do not take shelter in a ditch downwind of the vehicle. Use arms to protect head and neck.
- If in a mobile home, remember 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, **get out of the mobile home quickly**, take shelter in a building with a strong foundation. If shelter is not available, lie in a ditch or low-lying area between the tornado and mobile home. Do not take shelter in a ditch downwind of the mobile home. If a tornado hits it, debris could fall on top of you. Use arms to protect head and neck.

After a Tornado

- Check for injured or trapped persons.
- Give first aid when appropriate. Don't try to move the seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- Listen to radio or television for emergency information.
- Re-enter buildings with extreme caution.
- Use the telephone only in an emergency.
- Be alert to fire hazards such as broken electrical wires or damaged electrical equipment, gas or oil leaks, or smoldering piles of wet hay or feed.
- Report broken utility lines to appropriate authorities.
- Do not shut off utilities unless instructed to do so by local officials or unless you are in immediate danger from something like a gas leak. Remember that your gas supply must be turned back on by a professional.
- Have damage to your property assessed by your insurance company.

Related Emergencies

Tornadoes are part of a severe thunderstorm and bring with them the dangers of lightning, high winds, floods and flash floods from extremely heavy rainfall.