



GET READY!

TORNADOES

Every state has some risk of experiencing a tornado. The risk is increased, however, in the Midwest, Southeast, and Southwest. Tornadoes, which spin off from powerful thunderstorms, can kill people and devastate neighborhoods in seconds. The rotating, funnel-shaped cloud can have whirling winds up to 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of 1 mile wide and 50 miles long.

Before

- Stay informed—listen to a NOAA weather radio to check local forecasts and news reports regularly. Keep a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio along with extra batteries.
- Determine in advance where you will take shelter during a tornado. Basements and storm cellars are the best choices. If no underground shelter is available, choose an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- Look for the following danger signs: dark, often greenish sky; large hail; a large, dark, low-lying cloud that may be rotating; and a loud roar similar to a freight train.
- If local authorities issue a tornado watch, remain alert for approaching storms, watch the sky, and stay tuned to the radio or television.
- If local authorities issue a tornado warning, take shelter immediately.

- If you are outside with no shelter, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or a bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Watch out for flying debris, which is the cause of most fatalities and injuries during tornadoes.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in an urban or congested area in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safer shelter.

After

- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Stay clear of downed power lines.
- Help injured or trapped people.
- Check on others who may require assistance, such as the older adults, children, and people with disabilities.

During

- If you are in a building, go to a pre-designated shelter area, such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level. Stay away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Layers of clothes, even a mattress, can be pulled over your head to protect you from flying debris. Do not open windows.
- If you are in a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a nearby, sturdy building or storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

