

Know What To Do:

Tornadoes



“Tornado Alley” is the area of the country that runs north from Texas through eastern Nebraska and northeast to Indiana. Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas may see more of these unpredictable and dangerous storms than other states. It’s never too early to prepare and you can take several basic steps right now to protect yourself and your family.

First Things First - Protect Life

Know the terms used to describe tornado threats:

- **Tornado Watch** : Listen to radio or television weather sources as weather conditions are favorable for tornado development.
- **Tornado Warning:** Take shelter immediately because a tornado has been sighted in your area.
- **Severe Thunderstorm Watch** -Conditions are favorable for severe thunderstorm development.
- **Severe Thunderstorm Warning** - A severe thunderstorm is occurring or is imminent.

When a tornado has been sighted or a tornado warning has been issued, go to your shelter immediately. Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.

- In a ***house or small building***, go to the basement or storm cellar. If there is no basement, go to an interior room on the lower level (bathrooms, closets, interior hallways).
- In a ***school, nursing home, hospital, factory or shopping center***, go to pre-designated shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floor are usually safest. Stay away from open spaces and windows.
- In a ***high-rise building***, go to a small, interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- If you can, get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a heavy table or desk and hold on to it.
- Use arms to protect your head and neck.
- If in a ***mobile home, trailer, or vehicle***, get out immediately and go to a more substantial structure.
- If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert with your hands shielding your head.

Before a Tornado Threatens

- Decide in advance, where you will take shelter (a local community shelter, or in-residence “safe” room). When a tornado approaches, go there immediately.
- Create a family plan. Identify escape routes from your apartment-home and neighborhood and designate an emergency meeting place for your family to reunite if you become separated. Establish a friend or family contact point to communicate with concerned relatives.
- Put together an emergency kit that includes a three-day supply of drinking water, food you don’t have to refrigerate or cook; first aid supplies; a portable NOAA weather radio; a flashlight, prescription medications; extra car and house keys; extra eyeglasses; credit cards, money, and cash; important documents, including insurance policies.
- Make an inventory of your possessions and photograph or videotape your belongings. Keep records in a safe deposit box or some other safe place away from the premises.