



Disaster and Emergency Management Resources

Tornado Management Measures

Before the Tornado

- Develop a Family Emergency Plan and Supply Kit. (See Sections 2.1 – 2.4)
- Conduct tornado drills each tornado season. Designate an area in the home as a shelter and practice having everyone in the family go there in response to a tornado threat.
- Protect your home by using tornado-resistant building materials and practices during construction.
- Permanently connect a mobile or manufactured home to its foundation to decrease damage from high winds. If in a tornado-prone area, shelters are the best means of providing near-absolute protection for individuals who live in a mobile or manufactured home. A shelter can be constructed by a homeowner or as part of a mobile home park.

Seeking Shelter During a Tornado

At Home

- Pick a place in the home where family members can gather if a tornado is headed your way. One basic rule is *AVOID WINDOWS*. An exploding window can injure or kill.
- The safest place in the home is the interior part of a basement. If there is no basement, go to an inside room, without windows, on the lowest floor. This could be a center hallway, bathroom, or closet.

For added protection, get under something sturdy such as a heavy table or workbench. If possible, cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag, or mattress, and protect your head with anything available, even your hands. Avoid taking shelter where there are heavy objects, such as pianos or refrigerators, on the part of the floor that is directly above you. They could fall through the floor if the tornado strikes your house

In a Mobile Home

- *DO NOT STAY IN A MOBILE HOME DURING A TORNADO.* Mobile homes can turn over during strong winds. Even mobile homes with a tie-down system cannot withstand the force of tornado winds.
- Plan ahead. If you live in a mobile home, go to a nearby building, preferably one with a basement. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine, or culvert and shield your head with your hands.
- If you live in a tornado-prone area, encourage your mobile home community to build a tornado shelter.

On the Road

- The least desirable place to be during a tornado is in a motor vehicle. Cars, buses, and trucks are easily tossed by tornado winds.
- *DO NOT TRY TO OUTFRAN A TORNADO IN YOUR CAR.* If you see a tornado, stop your vehicle and get out. Do not get under your vehicle. Follow the directions for seeking shelter outdoors (see next section).

Outdoors

- Avoid areas with many trees.
- Avoid vehicles.
- Lie down flat in a gully, ditch, or low spot on the ground.
- Protect your head with an object or with your arms.

Long-Span Buildings

- A long-span building, such as a shopping mall, theater, or gymnasium, is especially dangerous because the roof structure is usually supported solely by the outside walls. Most such buildings hit by tornadoes cannot withstand the enormous pressure. They simply collapse.
- If you are in a long-span building during a tornado, stay away from windows. Get to the lowest level of the building – the basement if possible – and away from the windows.
- If there is no time to get to a tornado shelter or to a lower level, try to get under a doorframe or get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. For instance, in a department store, get up against heavy shelving or counters. In a theater, get under the seats. Remember to protect your head.

Office Buildings, Schools, Hospitals, Churches, and Other Public Buildings

- Extra care is required in offices, schools, hospitals, or any building where a large group of people is concentrated in a small area. The exterior walls of such buildings often have large windows.
- If you are in any of these buildings:
 - Move away from windows and glass doorways.
 - Go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest possible floor.
 - Do not use elevators because the power may fail, leaving you trapped.
 - Protect your head and make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down.

Shelter for People with Special Needs

- If you are in a wheelchair, get away from windows and go to an interior room of the house. If possible, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Cover your head with anything available, even your hands.
- If you are unable to move from a bed or a chair and assistance is not available, protect yourself from falling objects by covering up with blankets and pillows.
- If you are outside and a tornado is approaching, get into a ditch or gully. If possible, lie flat and cover your head with your arms.

After the Tornado

- Help 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.
- Call for help.
- If you smell gas, do not turn on any appliances or switches. This includes using phones, flashlights, or cell phones.
- Turn on radio or television to get the latest emergency information.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Leave the buildings if you smell gas or chemical fumes.
- Take pictures of the damage--both to the house and its contents--for insurance purposes.

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