

Emergency Preparedness and Response

What to do during a Tornado -

Taking Shelter

Your family could be anywhere when a tornado strikes--at home, at work, at school, or in the car. Discuss with your family where the best tornado shelters are and how family members can protect themselves from flying and falling debris.

The key to surviving a tornado and reducing the risk of injury lies in planning, preparing, and practicing what you and your family will do if a tornado strikes. Flying debris causes most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no *completely* safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.

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 area of 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. Do not get under your vehicle.

Outdoors

Do the following if you are caught outside during a tornado and there is no adequate shelter immediately available:

- Avoid areas with many trees.
- Protect your head with an object or with your arms.

Shelter for People with Special Needs

Advance planning is especially important if you require assistance to reach shelter from an approaching storm (see specific instructions in the next section).

- 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. Do 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.