



TORNADO SAFETY

NC DHHS Safety & Health

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Signs of an Approaching Storm

Some tornadoes strike rapidly, without time for a tornado warning, and sometimes without a thunderstorm in the vicinity. When you are watching for rapidly emerging tornadoes, it is important to know that you cannot depend on seeing a funnel: clouds or rain may block your view. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:

- A dark or green-colored sky
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud
- Large hail
- A loud roar that sounds like a freight train.

What you can do to prepare:

- Be alert for weather announcements. Follow weather forecasts. Install a weather app on your smartphone or purchase a NOAA weather radio.
- Familiarize yourself with your area and know the location of your designated severe weather shelter area.
- Practice periodic tornado drills to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of an actual event.
- Establish a system for communicating with your entire area to alert staff, visitors, patients, residents, etc. immediately in the event of an emergency.
- Avoid going outside. Stay away from windows.
- Gather supplies, such as blankets, flashlights, radios, water, if possible.

Tornado Safety in the Home:

- *Find a safe place to gather. Often that is the interior section of a basement. If you don't have a basement, go to an interior room on the first floor with no windows.*
- *Make sure your entire family knows where to go.*
- *Stay inside, don't try to drive away.*
- *Cover yourselves with blankets and towels, if possible.*
- *Protect your head with anything you can find, including your arms.*
- *For added protection, get under something sturdy, such as a table.*



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tornado>

Know the difference:

◇ Tornado Watch

Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.

◇ Tornado Warning

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Tornado warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. Go immediately to your designated shelter area.

What to do if a tornado occurs

While at work:

- Follow your facility/division emergency plan.
- Go to your designated shelter area.
- If you don't know the location of the shelter area, go to the lowest level and find an interior space.
- Move away from windows.
- Close doors, especially those leading into rooms with exterior windows.
- Do not use elevators.
- Protect your head.
- Get as low as possible.
- Don't leave the shelter area until an "all clear" announcement has been made.

While in a car:

- Wear your seat belt
- Don't try to outrun a tornado.
- Try to find a nearby shelter or building.
- If there is flying debris in the area, pull over and park.
- If you can get to an area lower than your car, such as a ditch or depression, exit your car and lie in that area. Don't hide under your car.
- If you can't safely exit your car, get as low as you can and cover yourself with a blanket.
- Whether sheltering inside or outside of your car, protect your head with anything you can find or your arms.

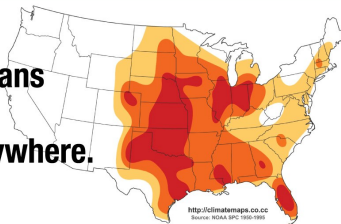
While outside:

- Seek shelter immediately.
- Go to the nearest sturdy building or basement.
- If you cannot seek shelter indoors:
 - ◆ Avoid areas with many trees
 - ◆ Find a low spot, such as a ditch or depression.
 - ◆ Lie on your belly, get as low as you can.
 - ◆ Protect your head with anything you can find or your arms.



1,200 tornadoes hit the U.S. each year.

An estimated 17% of Americans live in a tornado-prone zone, but they can touch down anywhere.



Make sure you **DUCK** during a tornado!

Down – Get down to the lowest level

Under – Get under something

Cover your head

Keep in the shelter until the storm has passed



International Association of Fire Fighters

Shelter for People with Special Needs

- Advance planning is particularly important for individuals who need assistance reaching shelter.
- The workplace should be aware of individuals with disabilities or limited mobility, whether they are employees, patients, or visitors, who will require assistance.
- Designate staff to assist with evacuation.
- For those who cannot relocate, shelter under a sturdy object, if possible. Otherwise, protect from falling objects with blankets and pillows.

Contact your facility Safety Officer for further information or assistance.