

# TORNADO DISASTER RESPONSE

## Background:

Tornadoes are violent storms that can strike anywhere, at any time and with little warning. Stay alert to these danger signs:

- Severe thunderstorms with strong, gusty winds.
- A dark, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from the sky to the ground.
- A roaring sound.

Know the difference between a **watch** and a **warning**.

- A **tornado WATCH** means a tornado is possible.
- A **tornado WARNING** means a tornado has been sighted or detected by weather radar- **TAKE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!**

## Before a Tornado:

### Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information from officials.
- Look for approaching storms.
- Look for the following danger signs:
  - Dark, often greenish sky
  - Large hail
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
  - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

## During a Tornado:

### If you are in:

#### A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise 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 (closet, interior hallway) 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. Do not open windows.

#### A vehicle, trailer, or mobile home:

- Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

#### The 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 bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

## After a Tornado:

Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical wellbeing.



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