Tornado Safety Meeting Kit

Tornado Safety Talk

Tornadoes are a serious threat for many areas across the country. There is an average of 1,000 confirmed tornadoes a year in the United States according to NOAA. Many of these tornadoes occur in the same geographical areas each year.

TORNADO WATCH/TORNADO WARNING

The first thing to know when it comes to tornadoes is the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning. A watch is when tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. A warning is when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. A warning indicates there is a tornado that is an imminent danger to life and property in that area.

TORNADOES-DEFINITION

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground. Tornadoes can destroy buildings, flip cars, and create deadly flying debris.

DANGERS

Tornadoes can move as fast as 70 miles per hour (112 km/h) and produce winds of more than 250 mph (400 km/h). They cause many deaths and injuries every year, as well as a great deal of property damage. Because tornadoes can develop very rapidly, it’s vital that people know what to do to reduce the risk to their personal safety and property.

RECOGNITION

Some tornadoes occur without a tornado warning. And sometimes the warnings are missed. So it’s important to recognize these signs of a tornado:

- Powerful thunderstorms marked by frequent flashes of lightning;
- Strong rotation in a cloud base;
- Whirling dust or debris on the ground, beneath a cloud base;
- Heavy precipitation followed by either calm or an intense wind shift;
- A loud and continuous roar, which, unlike thunder, doesn’t fade in a few seconds;

STEPS FOR SAFETY

Be prepared

- Fresh batteries and a battery-operated TV, radio, or internet-enabled device to listen to the latest emergency weather information
- A tornado emergency plan including access to a safe shelter for yourself, your family, people with special needs, and your pets
- An emergency kit (including water, non-perishable food, and medication)
- A list of important information, including telephone numbers

Be sure your children know what a tornado is, what tornado watches and warnings are, what county or parish they live in (warnings are typically issued by county or parish), and what makes a location a safe shelter, whether at home or at school.

Stay aware of weather conditions.

To protect yourself and your family from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or an NOAA weather radio for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. **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

If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV stations or to a NOAA weather radio or check the internet.

BEST TORNADO PRACTICES

No one can know a tornado's strength before it touches down, so keep up with local weather information, especially when thunderstorms are forecast. Prepare your home and family for the possibility of a tornado. Moving to shelter quickly is easier when everyone knows where to go, whether in your home or outdoors. Following these tips will give you the best chance for staying safe in a tornado.

- Take cover. Go to the basement and crouch down under the stairs. Do not take an elevator. If you can't get to a basement, go into a closet or bathroom. Or sit underneath a sturdy piece of furniture on the ground floor near the center of the building.
- Stay away from windows and outside doors.
- If possible, try to position yourself so that you are not below heavy objects (appliances, piano, etc.) on a floor above you. These objects might fall through a weakened floor.
- Use a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress to protect yourself from flying debris. Pull your knees up under you and protect your head with your hands.
- If you're driving, safely park your car and get to a building. If you can't get to a building, get away from the car, lie flat and face down in low ground and stay far from other cars or trees.
- If possible, try to avoid being in a building with a wide-span roof, such as an auditorium, church or hall. These roofs are vulnerable to collapse in a tornado.

FINAL WORD

Tornadoes can occur so quickly there is little time to get to shelter or pack an emergency kit. Protect yourself and your family by planning ahead what you’ll do if a tornado strikes.