**TORNADO SAFETY**

**About**

Tornadoes are violent: they can completely destroy well-made structures, uproot trees and hurl objects through the air like deadly missiles. Although severe tornadoes are most common in the Plains States, they can happen anywhere. Learn what to do to keep your loved ones safe.

**Top Tips**

* Identify a safe place in your home where household members and pets will gather during a tornado: a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
* In a high-rise building, pick a hallway in the center of the building. You may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor.
* In a mobile home, choose a safe place in a nearby sturdy building. If your mobile home park has a designated shelter, make it your safe place. No mobile home, however it is configured, is safe in a tornado.
* Know the difference!
  + A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible.
  + A tornado WARNING means a tornado is already occurring or will occur soon. GO TO YOUR SAFE PLACE IMMEDIATELY.

**BEFORE**

**Prepare in Advance**

Protecting Your Family

* Talk about tornadoes with your family so that everyone knows where to go if a tornado warning is issued. Discussing ahead of time helps reduce fear, especially for younger children.
* Check at your workplace and your children's schools and day care centers to learn about their tornado emergency plans. Every building has different safe places.
* Ensure that every member of your family carries a Safe and Well wallet card.
* Make sure you have access to NOAA radio broadcasts, either through streaming an online NOAA radio station, downloading a NOAA radio app in the Apple Store or Google Play, or purchasing a battery-powered or hand-crank NOAA radio in the Red Cross Store
* Check emergency kit and replenish any items missing or in short supply. especially medications or other medical supplies. Keep it nearby.

Protecting Your Pets & Animals

Prepare a pet emergency kit for your companion animals.

Protecting your home

* Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a storm.
* Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Strong winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed, causing damage or injury when they hit.
* Remove any debris or loose items in your yard. Branches and firewood may become missiles in strong winds.
* Consider installing permanent shutters to cover windows. Shutters can be closed quickly and provide the safest protection for windows.
* Strengthen garage doors. Garage doors are often damaged or destroyed by flying debris, allowing strong winds to enter. As winds apply pressure to the walls, the roof can be lifted off, and the rest of the house can easily follow.

Right Before a Tornado

Don’t wait until you see the tornado to act! If you do nothing else:

1. Listen to local area radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for the latest information and updates.

2. Move to an underground shelter, basement or safe room. If none is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative.

Remember: no area of a mobile home is safe during a tornado. If you have access to a sturdy shelter or a vehicle, go there immediately, using your seat belt if driving.

3. Find a local emergency shelter and know the best routes to get there if you need to.

Then, if you can, do this:

* Watch for tornado danger signs: dark, often greenish clouds – a phenomenon caused by hail; wall cloud – an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm; cloud of debris.
* Move or secure any of the items on your list of items to bring inside or anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
* Bring your companion animals indoors and maintain direct control of them.

**DURING**

If You Are Outdoors

* Seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building.
* If you cannot quickly walk to a shelter, immediately get into a vehicle and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. Remember to buckle your seat belt.
* Stay away from bridge/highway overpasses.
* If strong winds and flying debris occurs while driving, pull over and park, keeping your seat belt on and engine running. Put your head down below the windows, covering your head with your hands and a blanket.

**AFTER**

If you do nothing else:

* Let friends and family know you’re safe. - Register yourself as safe on the Safe and Well website
* If evacuated, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
* Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
* Check for injuries. If you are trained, provide first aid to persons in need until emergency responders arrive.

Caring for yourself & loved ones

* Pay attention to how you and your loved ones are experiencing and handling stress. Promote emotional recovery by following these tips.
* Watch animals closely and keep them under your direct control.
* Help people who require additional assistance—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.

Returning home safely

* Stay out of damaged buildings.
* Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.
* Follow these tips for inspecting your home’s structure and utilities & systems after a tornado.
* Take pictures of home damage, both of the buildings and its contents, for insurance purposes.

Cleaning and repairing your home

* Wear protective clothing, including long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes, and be cautious.
* Learn more about how to clean up after a tornado, including the supplies you’ll need and how to handle fire hazards such as gas, electricity and chemicals.
* Don’t just repair your home, build in tornado-resistant features to help protect against future damage.
* Strengthen existing garage doors to improve the wind resistance, particularly double-wide garage doors.
* If your home has been significantly damaged and will require rebuilding parts or all of it, consider building a safe room.
* Ask a professional to:

Look at common connections in wood frame buildings and add anchors, clips and straps to strengthen your home.

* Reinforce masonry walls that provide structural support to your home.
* Secure your chimney. Masonry chimneys that extend more than six feet above the roof or have a width of 40 inches or more should have continuous vertical reinforcing steel placed in the corners to provide greater resistance to wind loads.
* Permanently connect your manufactured home to its foundation.