

Tornados

Ready 



[Arabic](#) [English](#) [Español](#) [French](#) [Haitian Creole](#) [Japanese](#) [Korean](#) [Russian](#) [Tagalog](#) [Vietnamese](#) [Chinese- Simplified](#)

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

Unfortunately, severe weather or tornados can happen year-round, anywhere, and at any time of the day or night, even in wintertime.

If you are under a tornado or severe WEATHER WARNING:

- When bad weather is expected, Listen to your [NOAA Weather Radio](#), local news broadcasts, or government social media accounts for updated emergency information. Follow the instructions of state, local and tribal officials.



A **WATCH** means a tornado or severe flooding is possible.



A **WARNING** means a tornado or flood is happening or will happen soon.

- If there is a Tornado Warning... Go to a safe shelter immediately, such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or a small interior room on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- Do not go under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- If you cannot stay at home, make plans to go to a public shelter.

PREPARING for a Tornado

A tornado can:

- Happen anytime and anywhere.
- Bring intense winds, over 200 miles per hour.
- Look like a funnel shaped cloud.
 - **Know your area's tornado risk.** In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast have a greater risk for tornados.
 - **Know the signs of a tornado**, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar like a freight train.
 - **Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and [emergency alerts](#). If your community has sirens, then become familiar with the warning tone.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO



- There is one thing you can purchase that will really help you survive... that is a [NOAA Weather Radio](#). These radios are not just to hear about the weather. They include other warnings which could save your life!
- This NOAA radio broadcasts warnings, watches, forecasts, current weather, and other hazard information 24-hours a day directly from National Weather Service (NWS) offices across the country.
- Consider adding a battery-powered, solar, or hand crank NOAA radio. And have one on each floor of your home or workplace, so you will never miss a warning!
- **Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- A smartphone can be a lifeline in a natural disaster. And it can be used as a flashlight.
- But many disasters may take out electricity and cell services. So, always [Keep your cell phone charged](#). Download a [NOAA Weather App](#) for your phone today!
- **Identify and practice going to a safe shelter** such as a [safe room built using FEMA criteria](#) or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room, or basement on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- [Plan for your pet](#). Pets are an important member of your family, include them in your family's preparedness planning.
- **Prepare for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place** by gathering [emergency supplies](#), cleaning supplies, non-perishable [food](#), [water](#), medical supplies and medication.
- **Prepare the kids with tornado facts**, <http://www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/tornadoes>

Know WHERE to Go!

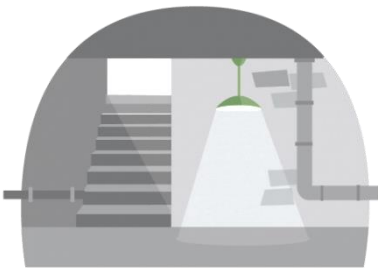


- Please think about where to go and what you would do ahead of time.
- Identify your safe space.

- Which room would you go to in your home or workplace if a tornado were coming? Pick one of those rooms shown on the image above with a green check mark in the lowest interior space or room. If you have a basement, Go There!
- Here is a suggestion, today or tomorrow please take a minute to walk down the hallway and actually go into that shelter space. See if there will be enough room for everyone.
- Where exactly would you stand or sit to ride it out?
- Are there a flashlight, food, water, chairs, and other items if you were stuck there for a while?

Staying Safe DURING a Tornado

If you hear a Tornado Warning Alert Message or a tornado is near, immediately go to a safe location that you have previously identified.



- **Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems** for current emergency information and instructions.
- **Protect yourself** by covering your head or neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around or on top of you.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- If possible, get under something sturdy: This could be a heavy table or workbench.
- Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag, or mattress
- Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down
- Cover your head with your hands
- **Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.** If driving, do not stop under an overpass or bridge.
- **If you are outdoors and cannot get into a building,** cover your head and neck with your arms, and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if available.

Staying Safe AFTER a Tornado



After a tornado, save your phone calls for emergencies!

Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.

- **Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities** for updated information.
- **Stay clear of dangerous debris, fallen power lines, or broken utility lines.**
- **Contact your healthcare provider if you are sick and need medical attention.** Wait for further care instructions and continue to shelter in place. If serious, Call 9-1-1.
- **Wear appropriate gear during clean-up** such as thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning [mold or other debris](#).

Associated Content

- [National Weather Service - Tornado Safety](#)
- [National Weather Service - Severe Weather Safety Guidelines](#)
- [Protective Actions Research for Tornado](#)
- [Tornado Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Taking Shelter from the Storm: Building a Safe Room Inside Your House \(PDF\)](#)
- [American Red Cross - Emergencies - Tornado](#)
- [CDC – Disasters - Tornadoes](#)
- [Recovering from Disaster](#)
- [Make a Plan](#)
- [Get Involved](#)
- [Ready Business](#)
- [Ready Kids](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

Information about Other Disasters and Emergencies

- [All Hazards](#)
- [Emergency Alerts](#)
- [Attacks in Public Places](#)
- [Avalanche](#)
- [Biohazard Exposure](#)
- [Cybersecurity](#)
- [Drought](#)
- [Earthquakes](#)
- [Explosions](#)
- [Extreme Heat](#)
- [Floods](#)
- [Chemicals and Hazardous Materials Incidents](#)
- [Home Fires](#)
- [Household Chemical Emergencies](#)
- [Hurricanes](#)
- [Landslides & Debris Flow](#)
- [Radiation Emergencies](#)
- [Pandemic](#)
- [Power Outages](#)
- [Severe Weather](#)
- [Space Weather](#)
- [Thunderstorms & Lightning](#)
- [Tornadoes](#)
- [Tsunamis](#)
- [Volcanoes](#)
- [Wildfires](#)
- [Winter Weather](#)