Severe Weather

Tornadoes

Department of Health

Tips to Stay Safe

Protect Yourself and Home

- Make a list of outdoor items to secure during severe weather alerts to prevent damage or injury.
- Secure hazardous objects like gas grills and propane tanks.
- Maintain trees and clean gutters to prevent home damage.
- Check for flood risk and consider installing preventive measures like sump pumps.
- If you live in a mobile home, pre-plan where you may seek shelter (e.g., in a sturdier building, safe room, or building with a basement).

Tornadoes can cause direct injuries from flying debris and worsen health issues due to loss of access to medical services, clean water, and safe shelter.

Stay Safe During a Tornado

- Take shelter immediately upon hearing tornado warnings or seeing signs like funnel clouds or hail.
- Seek shelter on the lowest floor, preferably underground. Keep as many walls between you and the outside as possible.
- Head to a safe area inside your home, like a basement or interior room away from windows.
  - Get to a windowless interior room, such as a bathroom, closet, or inner hallway.
  - Go to the center of the room.
  - If possible, take cover under a sturdy table or desk.
  - Use blankets or pillows to shield yourself from falling objects if you cannot move.
  - Protect your head with a helmet.
- If you're caught outdoors during a tornado and unable to find shelter.
  - Seek shelter in a ditch or lowest spot available.
  - Lie flat and cover your head with your arms for protection.
  - Avoid bridges and overpasses.
- Consider any special needs (e.g. mobility/physical, electricity dependence, medications, or medical equipment) for yourself or those you're with.
- Consider how you will receive important information on the storm(s).
- Are there local emergency management and/or local public health department apps that you should download?

Individuals with mobility or access and functional needs may face increased health risks during emergencies due to difficulties in quickly moving to safer locations or finding adequate shelter.

Recovery After a Tornado

- The United State Environmental Protection Agency has information on generators, drinking water, pesticides, chemical and oil spills, hazardous waste:, disaster debris, plus renovation and rebuilding at: https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/tornadoes#recover

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning?

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues a **Tornado Watch** when weather conditions in an area indicate an increased risk for severe weather that may be capable of producing a tornado.

The NWS issues a **Tornado Warning** when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. A warning means you should immediately take shelter.

Can my vehicle outrun a tornado?

If you're in a vehicle, do not try to outrun a tornado. Instead, drive to the closest shelter. The last place you want to be during a tornado is in a vehicle. Cars, buses, and trucks are easily tossed by tornado winds.

If you're unable to make it to a safe shelter, either get down in your vehicle and cover your head and, neck or leave your vehicle and seek shelter in the lowest spot you can find.

Stay away from highway overpasses and bridges.

What if I am outside when a tornado approaches?

If you're outside when a tornado approaches, find shelter quickly. If there is no shelter nearby, go to a low-lying area like a ditch. Protect your head and neck with an object or with your arms. Avoid areas with many trees.

Below are a list of additional helpful information and guidelines

- Tornadoes at: https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/tornadoes#recover
- Tornado Safety at: https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/tornado.html
- 10 Tornado Safety Tips to Keep Kids Safe at: https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/disaster-relief-in-america/tornado-tips-for-parents
- What You Need to Know When the Power Goes Out Unexpectedly at: https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/needtoknow.html
- Food and Water Safety During Power Outages and Floods at: https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/food-and-water-safety-during-power-outages-and-floods
- Protect Yourself and Others from Electrical Hazards After a Disaster at: https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/electrical.html