

# Tornado Safety

## HOW TO SURVIVE A TORNADO

### Severe Weather Alerts on NOAA Radio

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day. These radios may be purchased from most any electronics store. Tune to 162.400 MHz in Northwest Kansas. The hearing and visually impaired can get these warnings in other ways. People may listen to their favorite AM/FM radio station or TV station KLOE is 730 am, KKCI 102.5 fm and KWGB 97.9 fm. In Colby, listen to KXXX 790 am or The Ride 100.3 fm.

### Be Alert for Warning Signs

Each year about a thousand tornadoes touch down in the US. Only a small percentage actually strike occupied buildings, but every year a number of people are killed or injured. The chances that a tornado will strike a building that you are in are very small, however, and you can greatly reduce the chance of injury by doing a few simple things.

One of the most important things you can do to prevent being injured in a tornado is to be ALERT to the onset of severe weather. Most deaths and injuries happen to people who are unaware and uninformed. Young children or the mentally challenged may not recognize a dangerous situation. The ill, elderly, or invalid may not be able to reach shelter in time.

If you don't regularly watch or listen to the weather report, but strange clouds start moving in and the weather begins to look stormy, turn to the local radio or television station to get the weather forecast.

Check The Weather Channel for additional information, or if you have trouble getting up-to-the-minute forecasts on a regular radio, then a "NOAA weather radio" is a wise investment.

If a tornado "watch" is issued for your area, it means that a tornado is "possible."

If a tornado "warning" is issued, it means that a tornado has actually been spotted, or is strongly indicated on radar, and it is time to go to a safe shelter immediately.

Be alert to what is happening

outside as well. Here are some of the things that people describe when they tell about a tornado experience:

- A sickly greenish or greenish-black color to the sky.
- If there is a watch or warning posted, then the fall of hail should be considered as a real danger sign. Hail can be common in some areas, however, and usually has no tornadic activity along with it.
- A strange quiet that occurs within or shortly after the thunderstorm.
- Clouds moving by very fast, especially in a rotating pattern or converging toward one area of the sky.
- A sound a little like a waterfall or rushing air at first, but turning into a roar as it comes closer.

- Debris dropping from the sky.
- An obvious "funnel-shaped" cloud that is rotating, or debris such as branches or leaves being pulled upwards, even if no funnel cloud is visible.

If you see a tornado and it is not moving to the right or to the left relative to trees or power poles in the distance, it may be moving towards you. Remember that although tornadoes usually move from southwest to northeast, they can also move towards the east, the southeast, the north, and even northwest.

Encourage your family members to plan for their own safety in many different locations. It is important to make decisions about the safest places well BEFORE you ever have to go to them.

### Get yourself and your family to safety!

**The House**

- The safest place in the home is the basement and the safest place in the basement is in a corner. If no corner is available, an outside wall is the next best location.
- One basic rule that should be followed is to AVOID WINDOWS. Flying debris can kill, especially broken glass.
- For added protection, get under something strong, such as a workbench or heavy table. If possible, cover your body with a blanket or sleeping bag. Protect your head with anything that is available.
- Another safe place in the basement is underneath the basement stairway. Stairways are structurally sound and usually a safe place to be, especially if they are along an inside wall. No matter where you seek shelter, avoid being underneath heavy objects such as refrigerators, washing machines, or pianos.

**Outdoors**

- If you are trapped outside get as low as possible. Remember, your best chance for survival is to get away from the killing winds. Do not stand up and watch the tornado.
- Seek shelter in a ditch, gully, or culvert. Even just a low spot in the ground is going to give you some protection. Be aware of rising water and flooding.
- Do not get into a grove of trees. Remember to protect your head.
- Long Span Buildings**
- Long span buildings are especially dangerous because the entire roof structure is usually supported solely by the outside walls. When the tornado approaches, the strong winds knock out the supports and the roof collapses. Some examples

of these types of buildings are: civic centers, arenas, memorial buildings, theaters, shopping centers, grocery stores, swimming pools and gymnasiums.

**Motor Vehicles**

- The least desirable place to be during a tornado is in a motor vehicle. Cars, buses and trucks easily become flying missiles in a tornado.
- Never try to outrun a tornado.
- Stop your vehicle and get out. Seek shelter. Try to get into someone's basement. Do not get under or next to your vehicle; it may roll over on you.
- Mobile Homes**
- During a tornado, one of the least desirable places to be is in a mobile home. The winds knock the home

from its foundation, rolling it along the ground and breaking it apart. If you are in a mobile home when a tornado approaches, seek other shelter immediately. As last resort, get inside the bathtub and place a mattress over your head.

- Seek shelter on foot if possible. DO NOT DRIVE YOUR CAR! Do not get under a mobile home.
- Plan ahead if you live in a mobile home. Make arrangements with neighbors that have basements. When the weather looks threatening, go there. Encourage your mobile home group to develop its own shelter.

Local help is available if you are injured in severe weather, or your home is damaged. Trust these local businesses to help you.

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