

Tornado Safety Tips

The following safety tips can protect you during a tornado:

Tornadoes can occur without warning, giving you very little time to act. It is important to know the basics of tornado safety so that you can survive, should a tornado strike.

Tune to one of the following for weather information: local radio, local television, NOAA weather radio, or the Weather Channel.

Don't wait until the warning alarms sound to begin planning how to respond. Take responsibility for your safety and plan now.

Have a plan. Meet with household members to discuss how to react to a tornado warning. Hold tornado drills. Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.

When a tornado watch is issued, review your plan. Don't wait for a warning to be issued.

The safest place to be during a tornado is underground. If you have no basement or cellar, go to a small room (a bathroom or closet) in the middle of the building. Once there, try to find something sturdy that you can crawl under. Getting underneath a workbench or heavy table will protect you from flying debris and/or a collapsed roof.

Be aware of emergency shelter plans in buildings and schools where you and your family spend time. If a specific shelter does not exist, move to the building's lowest level. Try to avoid areas with large glass windows, large rooms, and wide, free-span roofs.

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to damage from high winds. Residents (even those who live in mobile homes with tie-downs) should seek safe shelter when a tornado threatens. Go to prearranged shelter when the weather turns bad. If you live in a mobile home park, talk to management about the availability of a nearby shelter. If no shelter is available, go outside and lie on the ground in a ditch or depression. Cover your neck and head with your hands and wait for the storm to pass. While waiting, be alert for the flash floods that may accompany tornadoes.

Never try to outrun a tornado. A tornado can toss cars and even large trucks around like toys. If you see a funnel cloud or hear a tornado warning issued on the radio or by siren, get out of your vehicle and find safe shelter. If no shelter is around, lie down in a low area using your hands to cover the back of your head and neck. Be sure to stay alert for flooding.

Tornado Facts

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground.

The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 miles per hour or more. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.

The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.

The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 miles per hour, but may vary from nearly stationary to 70 miles per hour

Ohio's peak season for tornadoes is April through July.

Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 2:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., but have been known to occur any hour day or night.

Ohio averages 16 tornadoes and five tornado-related fatalities per year.

Allen County has experienced 12 tornadoes since 1950, resulting in 18 tornado-related deaths.