Tornado Preparedness

Stay Safe
Although tornadoes typically occur most often in the Plains, they have been reported in every state. Tornadoes can happen at any time; at any location and can cause major damage. Learn what danger signs to look for, and what to do before, during and after a tornado.

Preparedness
Each community has a different warning system for a tornado. It is important to know what warning signals are used in your community. If warning signals are not available, look for these signs of a tornado:
- Dark skies (often greenish color)
- Thick, dark, low-lying clouds
- Hail
- Loud roar – Similar to a train

Before a Tornado
Prepare an emergency kit. Below are some suggestions of what to include in the kit.

The Essentials:
- Water
- Non-Perishable Foods
- First Aid Kit
- Clothing - Extra set for each member of your family. Tennis shoes/Boots, Jackets, Rain gear.
- Blankets or Sleeping Bags
- Baby formula, Diapers (if you have an infant)
- Medications
- Battery operated Radio

Other Items:
- Tools/Supplies
  - Whistle
  - Crowbar
  - Signal Flare
  - Duct Tape
  - Compass
  - Pliers, Hammer
  - Rope
  - Utility Knife
  - Paper Plates, cups and plastic utensils
- Important Documents:
  - Birth Certificates
  - Copy of Social Security Cards
  - Important Telephone Numbers
During a Tornado

If a Tornado is likely to occur in your area, you should get to shelter immediately!

- If you are in your home:
  o Go to the basement, storm cellar or the lowest level of your home.
  o If your home is one level, go to the center of the home away from windows and doors.
  o Always protect your head.
  o Turn off propane tanks
  o If your home is a manufactured home, get out immediately and go to a nearby storm shelter or building with a basement.

- If you are outside, with no shelter:
  o Get to a sturdy building immediately, if possible.
  o If you are unable to get to a building quickly, find an area that is lower than the level of a roadway. Cover your head with your arms or jacket.
  o Do not get under a bridge or overpass. The safest thing to do is lay low in a flat location.
  o Never try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.

After a Tornado

- Continue listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates.
- Stay alert for continued severe weather
- If you have become separated from your family, contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-RED-CROSS/1-800-733-2767 or visit the American Red Cross Safe and Well site: www.safeandwell.org. The American Red Cross also maintains a database to help you find family. Contact the local American Red Cross chapter where you are staying for information. Do not contact the chapter in the disaster area.
- If you evacuated, return home only when officials say it is safe.
- Drive only if necessary. If you must go out and watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.
- Keep away from loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company.
- Walk carefully around the outside your home and check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage before entering.
- Stay out of any building if you smell gas.
- Inspect your home for damage. Take pictures of damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance purposes. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.
- Use battery-powered flashlights in the dark. Do NOT use candles. Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch your pets closely and keep them under your direct control. Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are sure it’s not contaminated.
• Check refrigerated food for spoilage. If in doubt, throw it out.
• Wear protective clothing and be cautious when cleaning up to avoid injury.
• Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
• NEVER use a generator inside homes, garages, crawlspace, sheds, or similar areas, even when using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build.

For more information visit www.ready.gov/tornadoes