1. What are tornadoes, and why are they so dangerous?
   • Tornadoes start as strong thunderstorms and end as nature’s most violent, damaging storms.
   • Tornadoes appear as the familiar funnel-shaped black cloud with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour.
   • Damage in the tornado’s wake can extend to over 1 mile wide and 50 miles long.
   • There is some tornado risk during the year in every state.
   • Tornadoes often develop rapidly so that little advance warning is possible in some cases.
   • Tornado “watches” are declared when the potential for a tornado exists, and tornado “warnings” are declared when a tornado has been spotted in your area.

2. What are the warning signs of an approaching tornado?
   • Be alert to changing weather conditions, and look for approaching storms.
   • When weather conditions appear threatening, check radio or television for tornado alerts.
   • Look for the following danger signs: dark, often greenish sky; large hail; a large, dark, low-lying cloud, particularly if rotating; and a loud roar, similar to a moving freight train.
   • If you see approaching storms or danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

3. What can you do to prepare before a tornado strikes?
   • In a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately in a building or other solid structure. —Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris.
   • Stay inside, close windows, and go to a designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level.
   • If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (for example, a closet or hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls.
   • Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
   • Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck.
   • In a high-rise building, go to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
   • If you are in a mobile home, get out immediately and go to a sturdy, nearby building.

4. What should you do if you are caught outside?
   • Being in a vehicle during a tornado is not safe. If possible, drive to the nearest sturdy shelter.
• Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a vehicle. Instead, leave the vehicle, and seek safe shelter.
• If you cannot make it to a safe shelter, pull over and park, put your seat belt on, put your head below the windows, and cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or a cushion, if possible.
• If you can safely get lower than the level of the roadway (like a ditch or ravine), leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.

5. What should you do if you are caught outside?
• Being outside during a tornado is very dangerous. The safest course of action is always to seek a sturdy shelter. Sheds and other outbuildings are not safe.
• If you cannot make it to a safe shelter, lie flat and facedown on low ground, protecting the back of your head with your arms.
• Get as far away from trees and cars as you can, and watch out for flying debris.
• Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.

6. What steps should you take to protect against hazards after a tornado?
• Check for injuries, but do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
• Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves, and gloves when handling or walking on or near debris, and be aware of hazards from exposed nails and broken glass.
• If you suspect any damage to your home, shut off electrical power, natural gas, and propane to avoid electrocution, fire, or explosions.
• Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines.
• Report electrical hazards or gas leaks to the police and the utility company.
• Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline-, propane-, natural gas-, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage.
• Be careful when cleaning up debris, watch for hazards, and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), just as you would against job hazards.

DISCUSSION POINTS:
Review workplace emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a tornado during working hours. Recommend that employees develop family tornado plans, designate safe shelters within their homes, and conduct drills with the whole family.

CONCLUSION:
• Tornadoes are deadly—don’t take chances!
• Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning and can be deadly. Knowing how to respond at a moment’s notice can help you and your family stay safe if a tornado occurs in your area.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:
Have your employees take the Tornado Safety quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their ability to recognize tornado risks and emergency actions and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.