

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS FOR HOMEOWNERS



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SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

PREPARING FOR A TORNADO

Tornadoes mostly occur during spring and summer. On average, 1,000 tornadoes touch down in the US each year. They are dangerous and unpredictable and can cause significant damage to homes.

GETTING PREPARED

Know the warning signs. Understanding tornado terminology will help you anticipate your risk. According to the American Red Cross, “tornado watch” indicates that tornadoes are possible, while “tornado warning” confirms a tornado has been seen or detected. Tornadoes can form without much warning, but there are danger signs to look for:

- Dark skies, possibly tinted green
- A long, rotating cloud known as a funnel
- Roaring noises
- Hail
- Debris

Sign up for a warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.

Designate a shelter. Establish shelter zones at home. If your home has a safe room or a storm shelter, you already have a designated emergency shelter. If not, look for a secure place underground, like a basement or cellar. If these options aren’t available, choose a small room without windows, such as a closet, on the lowest level of the structure. It is also important to practice going to this shelter. Make a family emergency plan and have a conversation with your loved ones about the importance of being prepared. Regular drills help everyone learn the safety procedures for tornadoes, and they let you test and tweak your plan so you can be better prepared in a real emergency.

Create an emergency kit. Keep this kit in your designated shelter to have it on hand if you ever need to wait out a tornado or severe storm. These kits include non-perishable food, bottled water, essential medications, blankets, a radio, flashlights, and batteries.

PREPARE YOUR HOME

Inspect and reinforce your roof. Inspect the roof to make sure it is sealed tight. Consider reinforcing the roof with hurricane clips. These clips can help prevent the roof from lifting off of the home.

Trim trees, branches, and bushes around the home to help minimize debris damage. Store outdoor furniture or other items that could damage your property in a safe place.

Know how to turn off utilities. Locate the home’s gas and water shut-off valve. If damage occurs, know how to shut these valves off to prevent further loss.

Secure large furniture and appliances: Anchor down large pieces of furniture to the wall and/or floor with zip ties or furniture straps.

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EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Having an emergency supply kit can help you and your family tremendously if severe weather strikes your home. Your kit should have basic items your household may need for several days. Keep this kit in an easily accessible location if you need to evacuate. Be sure to maintain the items in your kit and update it as your needs change.

PRIORITY ITEMS

- Medications
- Cell Phones
- First Aid Kit
- Flashlights
- Extra Batteries or Charger
- Battery Operated Radio
- Cash/ Credit Cards

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

TIP: Be sure to place important documents in a sealed bag so they are not damaged.

- Insurance Cards
- Social Security Cards
- Passports
- Drivers' Licenses
- List of Illnesses/ Allergies/ Medications
- Mortgage Paperwork
- Local Maps

FOOD AND WATER

- Bottled Water (at least one gallon of water per person for at least three days)
- Non-Perishable Foods:
 - Granola Bars
 - Canned Food
 - Food in sealed bags
- Pet Food (if necessary)
- Baby Food (if necessary)

HYGIENE ITEMS

- Change of Clothes
- Garbage Bags
- Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Bleach
- Paper Towels

BASIC TOOLS

- Wrench
- Knife
- Scissors
- Pens/Paper
- Pliers
- Hammer/Nails
- Can Opener

OTHER ITEMS

- Sleeping Bags or Blankets
- Fire Extinguisher
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disposable Utensils
- Activities for Children (Books, Games, Puzzles)





SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

STEPS TO TAKE AFTER A TORNADO

Preparedness can help keep you safe if a tornado hits your town, but it may not be able to protect your property against the strength of these devastating storms. Our expert teams are here to help guide you from crisis to resolution as soon – and as safely – as possible.

SAFETY FIRST

If you are trapped, draw attention to yourself. Send a text, bang on a wall or pipe, or use a whistle to help rescuers find you. Use a cloth or mask to protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from dust.

Check for injuries. Ensure that you and everyone in your shelter is okay. If a person is hurt, call 911 immediately. Don't try to move a person unless they are in an unsafe area.

Stay informed. Continue to monitor local radio or TV stations, or a NOAA weather radio for updated information. Multiple rounds of thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes are possible during severe weather outbreaks.

Contact friends or family. Let them know you are okay, but keep phone lines open for emergency calls.

ASSESS YOUR HOME

Clean up your home safely. After the threat for tornadoes, check to see if your property has been damaged. Be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes when walking through storm damage to avoid injury.

Carefully check your home's walls, floors, doors, windows, and staircases for damage. If you see structural damage, like cracks in the foundation or missing support beams, you may need to relocate to a shelter or another safe location.

Check gas, electrical, and water lines for damage. If you smell gas or see a broken line, shut off the main valve from the outside. (Note: if gas is turned off, a professional must restore service.)

Check for frayed wiring or sparks. If there is an odor of something burning, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker.

Do not use matches, lighters, appliances, or light switches until you are sure there are no gas leaks. Sparks from electrical switches could ignite gas, causing an explosion.

Listen to reports from local officials for advice on water precautions in your home. Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to make baby formula, make ice, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, or wash dishes.

