

Tornado Safety Tips



Before the Tornado

- Update your phone number and e-mail address with your electric company so you can be served faster in the event of an outage.
- Develop an emergency plan that addresses any special medical needs you or your family members have. Call your local emergency management office to discuss necessary arrangements.
- Have your Emergency Outage Kit stocked and readily available.
- Designate a secure shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level in the event of a tornado.
- Pay attention to local weather reports on the radio, television, or Internet.
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - Dark, often greenish sky;
 - Large hail;
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating); or
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.
- If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

During the Tornado

- If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately. Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head.
- If you are inside:
 - Go to a pre-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 (closet, interior 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.
 - Do not open windows.
 - Stay tuned to a battery-powered radio for further information and instructions.

- If you are outside with no shelter:
 - Immediately get into a car, buckle your seat belt, and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter.
 - If your car is hit by flying debris while you are driving, pull over and park.
 - Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.
 - Do not go under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
 - Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car. Instead, leave the car immediately for safe shelter.
 - Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.
- Stay away from downed power lines and debris. Treat all fallen wires and anything touching them as though they are energized. Immediately report downed lines to your electric company.
- After a tornado, be aware of possible structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazards in your home. In general, if you suspect any damage to your home, shut off electrical power, natural gas, and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions.

If Your Power Is Out

- Report your outage immediately to your local electric company. Don't rely on your neighbors to report your outage.
- In hot weather, close drapes and blinds on the sunny side of your house, drink plenty of fluids, take your pets to a cool basement location, and go to an air-conditioned civic center, mall, or library if necessary to stay cool.
- Remain patient. Every electric company has a detailed plan for restoring electrical service after a power outage. Typically, one of the first steps a company takes—to prevent injuries and fires—is to make sure that power is no longer flowing through downed lines. Restoration then proceeds based on established priorities, which you can learn about on EEI's Web site, www.eei.org.

After the Tornado

- Continue to monitor the radio for further information and instructions.
- Be careful when entering any structure that has been damaged.
- Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves, and gloves when handling or walking on or near debris.

Source: www.Ready.gov, a website operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)