



Tornado Safety

Tornadoes are often destructive and even deadly. They can occur at any time of the day or night. Over 1,500 people are injured each year due to tornadoes. On average there are 80 deaths attributed to tornadoes, with most of these occurring because people don't leave mobile homes or cars.

Knowing the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning can save your life.

- **Tornado Watch-** Conditions are favorable for the development of thunderstorms that will have a strong capability of producing tornadoes.
- **Tornado Warning-** A tornado has been spotted by a trained observer or Doppler radar has indicated a developing tornado and you should seek shelter immediately.

If a **Tornado Warning** is issued for your county here are some steps you can take.

If you are at home or in a small building move go to the basement. A basement provides the safest shelter from a tornado. If there is not a basement in the building move to an interior room or hall. The room should be small, such as a bathroom or closet on the lowest level of you house. If possible make sure there are no windows in the room to avoid injury from flying glass.

If you are at a school, hospital, factory, or shopping mall there should be a pre-designated shelter area. If there is not, move to an interior hallway on the lowest floor avoiding large windows or glassed areas. It is best if you stay away from large rooms like school gyms or dining rooms. You should crouch down and protect your head with your hands.

If you are threatened by a tornado and you are in a high rise building move to center of the building. Again the best place would be a hallway or small room crouching down protecting your head with your hands.

History has proven the worst place to get caught in a tornado is a mobile home or car. If a tornado threatens, leave the mobile home or car and seek shelter in a sturdy shelter. If you are in a car and a sturdy shelter can't be reached, leave the car and lie in the nearest ditch, gully or low spot shielding your head with your hands. An automobile provides virtually no protection against the strong winds of a tornado.

There are many myths about tornadoes, but there are many things that have been proven true. Tornadoes do travel at about 30 mph, but can travel across land at speeds up to 70 mph. The typical tornado does move from the southwest to the northeast, but it is not uncommon for them to move erratically and travel in any direction. This is why it is so dangerous to try to outrun one in your car.

One of the biggest myths is whether to open your the windows in your home when a tornado is moving towards it. It was once thought opening them would prevent damage from a sudden drop in atmospheric pressure, but research shows pressure changes within a tornado are minor in comparison to the whole damage process. Opening windows may lead to more damage inside structures from the strong winds of a tornado. This means **leave your windows closed** when one threatens.