

Tornado Safety Tips for Your Home



What to do when a tornado watch or warning sounds

Tornadoes. Windstorms. They can destroy entire neighborhoods within minutes and leave a path of devastation for miles.

Tornadoes average a wind speed of 112 mph, but can produce winds up to 200-300 mph. That's nearly twice the speed of most hurricanes. Straight line winds from thunderstorms often produce tornado-like damage as well, and these wind bursts can occur throughout the country, sometimes without predictable signs of heavy rain, thunder, lightning or hail. If a tornado warning alarm sounds, you may have only seconds to take cover. That's why it's important to know exactly what to do when severe weather threatens your home and family. Making the right moves can save your life and the lives of those you love.

Learn the warning signs

Nobody likes to cancel a golf game or other fun activity, but when weather looks threatening, remember:

Put safety first

Be aware of hailstorms, blowing debris, or the roaring "train" sound of an approaching tornado. Tornadoes can develop rapidly and sometimes strike before warnings can be issued.

Postpone outdoor activities if your area is under a watch. A tornado warning means an actual tornado has been sighted.

Choose the right place for shelter

Know ahead of time where you will go if storms threaten your home and family. Shelter information is available at your nearest State Division of Emergency Services.

- **If you're inside a mobile or manufactured home, leave immediately!** Even manufactured homes equipped with tie-downs can be blown away by severe winds.
- **Do not take shelter in a crawl-space beneath the home.** A tornado could lift the home and drop it on you. Evacuate and go to the nearest shelter.
- **If you're inside a site-built or modular home, go to a basement or room without windows on the lowest floor.** Wrap yourself in coats, sleeping bags or towels to protect against flying debris.

Choose the right place for shelter, continued

- **Take cover if you can't reach a shelter.** Go outside and lie flat in a nearby ditch, ravine or depression in the ground, and cover your head with your hands. Never take shelter under elevated structures like a manufactured home. A tornado can pick up the home and put you in serious danger. **Warning:** Never try to outrun a tornado in a car. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and toss a car through the air.

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