

# BE PREPARED FOR A TORNADO

**Tornadoes can  
destroy buildings,  
flip cars, and create  
deadly flying debris.**



**FEMA**

FEMA V-1010/March 2018

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground.



Can happen anytime



Bring intense winds



Can happen anywhere



Look like funnels

## IF YOU ARE UNDER A TORNADO WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

Go to a safe room, basement, or storm cellar.



If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.

If there is no basement, get to a small, interior room on the lowest level.



Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.

Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.



Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.



Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

# HOW TO STAY SAFE

## WHEN A TORNADO THREATENS

### Prepare NOW

**Know your area's tornado risk.** In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast have a greater risk for tornadoes.

**Know the signs of a tornado,** including a rotating funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar—similar to a freight train.

**Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.

**Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.

**Identify and practice going to a safe shelter** for high winds, such as a safe room built using FEMA criteria or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level.

**Consider constructing a safe room** that meets FEMA or ICC 500 standards.

### Survive DURING

**Immediately go to a safe location** that you identified.

**Take additional cover** by shielding your head and neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around you.

**Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio,** or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.

**Do not try to outrun a tornado** in a vehicle.

**If you are in a car or outdoors** and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.

### Be Safe AFTER

**Keep listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio,** and local authorities for updated information.

**If you are trapped, cover your mouth** with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.

**Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.**

**Do not enter damaged buildings** until you are told that they are safe.

**Save your phone calls for emergencies.** Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.

**Be careful during clean-up.** Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves.



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### Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to [Ready.gov/tornadoes](https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes). Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **tornado**.