

READY TOGETHER FOUNDATION
COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE LIBRARY

RTF-114

Tornado Preparedness Guide

A Practical Guide to Protecting Your Family Before, During, and After a
Tornado

Building Resilient Communities Together

Tornadoes Can Form Quickly

Tornadoes are among the most powerful and destructive weather events. They can develop rapidly, producing extremely strong winds capable of damaging homes, uprooting trees, and creating dangerous flying debris.

Preparing before tornado season gives your family the confidence to respond quickly and safely.

Preparedness begins before the warning is issued.

Why Tornado Preparedness Matters

Preparing for tornadoes helps your family:

- Respond quickly when warnings are issued.
- Reduce the risk of injury.
- Know where to take shelter.
- Protect important documents and emergency supplies.
- Recover more safely after the storm.

Preparation saves lives.

Before Tornado Season

Take these important steps:

- ☐ Prepare a family emergency plan.
- ☐ Build and maintain an emergency kit.
- ☐ Identify the safest shelter in your home.
- ☐ Practice tornado drills with your family.
- ☐ Sign up for local emergency alerts.
- ☐ Keep a battery-powered or hand-crank weather radio.
- ☐ Review evacuation and shelter plans regularly.

Prepared families prepare before severe weather arrives.

Know the Difference

Understanding weather alerts helps you act quickly.

Tornado Watch

Conditions are favorable for tornadoes.

Stay alert and be prepared to take shelter.

Tornado Warning

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

Take shelter immediately.

Do not wait to see the tornado.

Where to Take Shelter

The safest locations include:

- ☐ A basement.
- ☐ A storm shelter.
- ☐ A small interior room on the lowest floor.
- ☐ A hallway or bathroom without windows.

Stay away from:

- ☐ Windows.
- ☐ Exterior walls.
- ☐ Large open rooms.
- ☐ Mobile homes.

Protect your head and neck with your arms, a mattress, blanket, or sturdy helmet if available.

If You Are Outdoors

If no sturdy shelter is available:

- ☐ Seek a substantial building immediately.
- ☐ Do not shelter under bridges or overpasses.
- ☐ Stay away from trees and power lines.
- ☐ Protect your head from flying debris.

If You Are Driving

Driving is dangerous during a tornado.

If possible:

- ☐ Drive to the nearest sturdy building.

If you cannot safely reach shelter:

- ☐ Leave your vehicle only if a safer shelter is immediately available.
- ☐ Follow guidance from emergency officials.

Never try to outrun a tornado in heavy traffic or if conditions are unsafe.

After the Tornado

When the danger has passed:

- ☐ Check yourself and others for injuries.
- ☐ Watch for downed power lines.
- ☐ Avoid damaged buildings.
- ☐ Listen to official emergency information.

- ☐ Photograph damage for insurance purposes if it is safe to do so.
- ☐ Help neighbors when it is safe.

Recovery begins with safety.

Protecting Children

Help children by:

- ☐ Practicing tornado drills.
- ☐ Showing them where to shelter.
- ☐ Explaining tornado safety in simple language.
- ☐ Keeping comfort items in your emergency kit.

Prepared children are more confident during emergencies.

Caring for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

Ensure they have:

- ☐ Accessible shelter plans.
- ☐ Emergency medications.
- ☐ Mobility equipment.
- ☐ Caregiver support.
- ☐ Emergency contact information.

Planning ahead makes emergencies easier to manage.

Caring for Pets

Prepare:

- ☐ Pet carrier or leash.
- ☐ Food and water.
- ☐ Medications.
- ☐ Identification tags.
- ☐ Comfort items.

Bring pets into your shelter whenever possible.

Ready Together Action

Complete these three steps this week:

- ☐ Identify the safest shelter in your home.
- ☐ Practice a family tornado drill.
- ☐ Check your weather alert system and weather radio.

Prepared families respond quickly because they prepare early.

Review Your Tornado Preparedness

Review your tornado safety plan:

- ☐ Before tornado season.
- ☐ Every six months.
- ☐ After moving to a new home.
- ☐ After changes in your household.

Preparedness is an ongoing commitment.

About Ready Together Foundation

Ready Together Foundation is dedicated to building resilient communities through emergency preparedness, emergency relief and response, youth engagement, and outreach to vulnerable populations.

Our work focuses on:

- Community Emergency Preparedness
- Emergency Relief & Response
- Youth Preparedness & Leadership
- Vulnerable Population Outreach

Together, we are building stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

Ready Together Foundation

Building Resilient Communities Together

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Preparedness is a journey, not a one-time event. Every small step you take today helps protect the people you care about tomorrow.