

TORNADO INFORMATION

WHAT IS A TORNADO?

A violently rotating column of air extending downward from a thunderstorm cloud and touching the ground.

WHEN AND WHERE DO TORNADOES OCCUR?

They can occur any place in the United States, and at any time of the year. Tornadoes generally occur during the afternoon hours of hot and humid days with southerly winds and ominous skies. Familiar thunderstorm clouds are present, but they tend to have a disordered, upside-down appearance and may have an abnormal, dark color.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A TORNADO

Although not all funnel-shaped clouds are tornadoes, the key is the dark funnel shape with the point toward the ground. The general appearance and motion are similar to the smaller "dust devil" of the Southwest. When nearby, a tornado has an awesome sound comparable to the combined roars of a number of jet engines.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TORNADOES

The cloud moves at about 25 to 40 miles per hour, although the speed may vary from 0 to over 60 mph. It may travel for several hundred miles, but the average is about 15 miles. The path of effect will average about 250 yards wide. The circular air speed within the tip of the funnel may exceed 400 miles per hour. Rain, and frequently hail, generally will precede the tornado, and heavy rain will follow it.

WHY THE DESTRUCTION?

Damage results when the tornado "touches down" -- that is, when the small tip of the funnel with its violent winds contacts the ground. The winds can uproot trees, destroy structures, and propel objects and debris at high velocities. Differences in air pressure caused by the rotation can cause buildings to collapse.

- ☼ **Tornado WATCH:** An alert to the public meaning that meteorological conditions over a wide area are such that a tornado is possible.
- ☼ **Tornado WARNING:** Means that a tornado has been sighted. Persons in the area of its expected path should take immediate safety precautions.

GET INFORMATION FROM YOUR RADIO OR TELEVISION STATION

**DO NOT USE THE TELEPHONE EXCEPT TO REPORT SIGHTINGS AND
DAMAGE TO THE POLICE OR SHERIFF.**

TO SURVIVE A TORNADO REQUIRES INTELLIGENT ACTION

IN OPEN COUNTRY

If driving, move away at right angles from the apparent path of the tornado. If not possible to move away, lie face down in the nearest depression, culvert, ditch, or ravine.

IN DEVELOPED AREAS

Seek shelter inside. Keep some windows open - then stay away from windows. The pressure may cause windows to break with explosive force, sending showers of glass fragments into the room.

☼ Homes with Basements

Greatest safety is to be found in a basement. Additional protection is afforded by taking cover under a strong table or work bench placed in a corner. Small basement rooms with strong walls or spaces under stairs also provide good protection.

☼ Homes without Basements

Small central rooms with strong walls (interior closets, storerooms, bath rooms) provide protection. Safety is enhanced by taking cover under heavy furniture.

☼ Mobile Homes

Mobile homes are especially vulnerable to high winds, and must be abandoned in favor of better protection. Mobile home parks may have permanently constructed community centers or recreation buildings which may provide protection; otherwise seek shelter in a ditch or other location.

☼ Large Buildings (offices, commercial, hospitals, etc.)

Basement areas provide greater protection, but in strongly constructed buildings, interior windowless spaces with strong walls, interior hallways, stairwells, etc. are safe.

WARNING: Commercial or "downtown" areas are to be avoided during tornadoes due to the large quantities of loose objects, materials, signs and debris, which become projectiles in the high winds.

☼ Industrial and Factory Buildings

Upon warning, post a lookout. If the storm approaches, move employees in accordance with advance planning to areas having suitable protection.

☼ Schools

AVOID auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias and other large rooms with poorly supported roofs. Basements or other excavated spaces afford better protection. In strongly constructed buildings, an interior hallway or restrooms on the ground floor will give a large degree of safety. For buildings of lighter construction, move to a stronger building or to nearby ditches or get under tables. **Stay away from windows.**