

TORNADO WATCH VS. WARNING

Tornado Watch: Be Prepared!

Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans and check supplies and your safe room.

Be ready to act quickly if NWS issues a warning or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps save lives!

Watches are issued by the Storm Prediction Center for counties where tornadoes may occur. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or even states.

Tornado Warning: Take Action!

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy shelter. Avoid windows.

If you are in a mobile home, a vehicle or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and cover your head to avoid flying debris. Local NWS offices issue warnings.

Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area, around the size of a city or small county. Warnings are issued when a tornado is spotted on the ground or identified by a forecaster on radar.

LEARN MORE

ABOUT TORNADO SAFETY AT:

weather.gov/safety/tornado



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE



TORNADO SAFETY

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



BEFORE A TORNADO

- ✓ **Be Weather-Ready:** Check the forecast often to see if a tornado is coming. Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.
- ✓ **Sign Up for Notifications:** Know how to get warnings. Some communities have outdoor sirens. Others depend on news and smart phones to alert residents of severe storms capable of producing tornadoes.
- ✓ **Create a Plan:** Have a family plan that includes an emergency meeting place and shelter spaces. Pick a safe room in your home, such as a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
- ✓ **Practice Your Plan:** Conduct a drill regularly so everyone knows what to do if a tornado is approaching. Make sure all family members know where to go when a tornado warning is issued. Don't forget pets if time allows.
- ✓ **Prepare Your Home:** Consider having your safe room reinforced. You can find plans for reinforcing an interior room to provide better protection at [fema.gov/safe-room-resources](https://www.fema.gov/safe-room-resources)
- ✓ **Help Your Neighbor:** Encourage your loved ones to prepare for the possibility of tornadoes. Take CPR training so you can help if someone is hurt.



If you don't have a tornado shelter, stay in an inside room or hallway and cover your head. Photo: NOAA

DURING A TORNADO

- ✓ **Stay Weather-Ready:** Continue to listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay updated about tornado watches and warnings.
- ✓ **At Your House:** If you are in a tornado warning area, go to your basement, safe room or an interior room away from windows. Don't forget pets if time allows.
- ✓ **At Your Workplace or School:** Follow your tornado drill and proceed to your tornado shelter quickly and calmly. Stay away from windows and do not go to large open rooms such as cafeterias, gymnasiums or auditoriums.
- ✓ **Outside:** Seek shelter inside a sturdy building immediately if a tornado is approaching. Sheds and storage facilities are NOT safe.
- ✓ **In a vehicle:** Being in a vehicle during a tornado is NOT safe. The best course of action is to drive to the closest shelter. If you are unable to make it to a safe shelter, either get down in your car and cover your head, or abandon your car and seek shelter in a low lying area such as a ditch or ravine.

AFTER A TORNADO

- ✓ **Stay Informed:** Keep listening to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for updates about more tornado watches and warnings that may be coming. The next round of thunderstorms may bring more tornadoes.
- ✓ **Contact Your Family and Loved Ones:** Let your family and close friends know you are okay so they can help spread the word. Send text messages or post updates on social media. These posts are more reliable forms of communication than phone calls.
- ✓ **Assess the Damage:** After the tornado threat has ended, check for property damage. When walking through storm damage, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes. Contact utilities if you see power lines down. Stay out of damaged buildings. Be aware of insurance scammers.
- ✓ **Help Your Neighbor:** If you see someone injured, call 911. Then, if you are trained, provide firstaid until emergency responders arrive.



After a tornado, watch out for dangerous debris such as sharp metal, glass or downed power lines. Photo: NOAA

For more information, visit [weather.gov/safety/tornado](https://www.weather.gov/safety/tornado)