



Tornado Safety

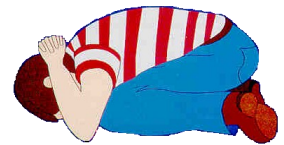


<http://www.weather.gov/om/severeweather>

Tornadoes can happen at any time of the year, and at any time during the day or night. Though more common in the afternoon and evening hours, tornadoes can happen and have been reported at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning! Many people think a tornado is always visible, but there are times in storms which have high amounts of precipitation, it can be completely wrapped in rain, making it indistinguishable from surrounding clouds. Contrary to what some may believe, tornadoes can and do cross rivers, mountains, and big cities. For these reasons, it is very important to have a plan of action in case of a tornado.

What should I do when a tornado is approaching or a warning has been issued?

- **SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!** Once in shelter, take the protection position.



Where do I go?

- **Reinforced shelters** – A basement or underground shelter is the best option. Protect your head and eyes from deadly flying debris. If no basement is available, go to an interior area on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom or closet. If possible get under something sturdy like a bench or table. **Always stay away from windows!**

What should I do if I am located...

- **Outdoors** – If you can drive away from the tornado, do so. On average, tornadoes move at 35 - 45 MPH, so driving away would be the first course of action. If you can't drive away from the tornado, as would be the case if you were driving directly toward the tornado on a divided highway or were stuck in slow moving traffic, abandon your vehicle and seek shelter in a nearby structure, such as a house or other well built structure. If no buildings are available and driving away is not an option: Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. NEVER seek shelter under a bridge or overpass.

The important thing to understand is that if you find yourself outside or in a car and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you are at risk from a number of things outside your control, such as the strength and path of the tornado and debris from your surroundings. This is the case whether you stay in your car or seek shelter in a depression or ditch, both of which are considered last resort options that provide little protection. The safest place to be is always an underground shelter, basement or safe room.

- **In a Mobile Home** – Evacuate immediately! Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to overturning and destruction from strong winds and tornadoes. Tie-downs generally will not protect a mobile home from tornadoes. If possible, leave the mobile home and go to a community shelter. If none is available, a ditch, culvert, or other low lying area may offer better protection. Have a plan of action prepared before a storm hits.
- **At School, Work, Shopping or in Other Buildings** – Stay indoors! Avoid cars, buses, or any other vehicle. Follow plans made in advance to go to a basement, an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor. Avoid the end of any hallway that opens to the outside as well as rooms with windows or outside walls. Stay out of auditoriums or any other structure with wide free-span roofs, as they are quite vulnerable to tornadic winds. Once you are in shelter, crouch down and cover your head!



Flash Flood Safety

<http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov>



On average, more people are killed by flooding than by any other single severe weather hazard, including tornadoes, lightning, and hurricanes. Most of these deaths occur at night, when it is more difficult to recognize flood dangers, and when people are trapped in vehicles. Do you and your family know what to do in case of a flood?

Remember...

- **DO NOT** drive onto a flooded roadway.
- **DO NOT** drive through flowing water.
- If you approach a roadway that is flooded, **TURN AROUND - DON'T DROWN**.
- Drive with extreme caution if roads are even just wet or it is raining. You can lose control of your vehicle if hydroplaning occurs, which is when a layer of water builds up between your tires and the road, causing there to be no direct contact between your vehicle and the road.



If a Flash Flood Warning is issued for your area...

- **If advised to evacuate, do so immediately!** Act quickly to save yourself, you may not have much time.
- Get out of areas that are subject to flooding and move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood waters. Low spots such as dips, canyons, and washes are not the places you want to be during flooding!
- **DO NOT** camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- **DO NOT** drive if not necessary. If driving is necessary, do not attempt to drive over a flooded road, as the depth of the water is not always obvious, and the roadway may no longer be intact under the water. Never drive around a barricade, they are placed there for your protection! If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and move to higher ground before water sweeps you and your vehicle away.
- **DO NOT** try to walk, swim, or play in flood water. You may not be able to determine if there are holes or submerged debris, or how quickly the water is flowing, and you may be swept away. If water is moving swiftly, as little as 6 inches of water can knock you off of your feet! There is also a danger of hazardous materials polluting the water. Also remember that water is an electrical conductor, if there are power lines down, there is a possibility of electrocution.
- Always continue to monitor the situation through the National Weather Service website, your NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards, or favorite local television or radio stations.

Why is “Turn Around - Don’t Drown” so important?

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other severe weather related hazard. The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. More than half of all flood related deaths result from vehicles being swept downstream. Of these, many are preventable.

DRIVER SAFETY TIPS FOR FLASH FLOODING

- ❑ Flash flooding is the leading weather-related killer in the United States.*
- ❑ More than 100 people are killed every year in flash floods. Half of the victims die trapped in their cars.**
- ❑ Some floods can take several hours or even days to develop, but a flash flood can hit in a matter of a few minutes, typically occurs in low-lying areas and is caused by intense rainfall from a thunderstorm or several thunderstorms.
- ❑ A Flood Watch means flooding is possible, you should stay alert and be prepared to evacuate.
- ❑ A Flood Warning means flooding is occurring or about to occur, the flood area should be immediately evacuated and those affected should go to higher ground.
- ❑ The need for action is most urgent in a flash flood because it happens so rapidly.
- ❑ Drivers should not be lulled into a sense of false security just because they are in a vehicle when flooding occurs.
- ❑ When water is running across a road, drivers should always turn around and choose a different route.
- ❑ If you're in a vehicle during a flash flood or if water is rising around it, all occupants should get out immediately and go to higher ground. Just six inches of water can cause tires to lose traction and slide; 12 inches will float many vehicles.
- ❑ Don't sit in the vehicle and let it fill up with water. Stay calm and unbuckle your seat belt. Open the door to get out as long as water is below the bottom of the door.

- If water is higher than the bottom of the door, don't open the door because it will let in water. Power windows don't stop working immediately, so you should be able to roll your window down and get out that way.
- Carrying a special hammer for breaking vehicle windows would be helpful in case windows can't be rolled down. Rear window may be best escape route since it's larger. A flashlight helps in the dark, especially if you're alone in an area with no streetlights.
- Do not touch, brush against or try to remove a live wire on your vehicle while exiting.
- Once outside the vehicle, go to higher ground. If there is no ground or structure nearby that is higher than the roof of your vehicle, consider climbing on to your vehicle's roof, especially to avoid being swept away by fast-moving water.
- Try to keep your cell phone dry and operational, so you can call 911 after escaping to higher ground.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency*

***National Weather Service*