



TORNADO - A VIOLENT STORM!

Tornadoes can appear suddenly with no warning and can be invisible until they pick up dust and debris or a funnel cloud appears.

While tornadoes are most common in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest, they can occur in any state at any time of the year, making advance preparation vitally important. Plan and practice **how** and **where** you will take shelter.

There are three steps you can take to make sure you can act quickly should a tornado happen where you live:

1. **Put a kit together now.** Include items such as non-perishable food, water, a battery operated or hand cranked radio, extra flashlights and batteries. Store these items in your shelter location.

2. **Make a plan.** Since your family may not be together when a tornado strikes, it is important to know how you will contact each other, get back together and what to do in case of emergency. Plan both inside and outside places where your family will meet. Make agreements with neighbors to share their basement or lower floor apartment in a disaster, but do this way ahead of time. Remember, in a disaster, it is easier to call long distance than across town, so designate a friend or family member who lives out of the area as your emergency contact; making sure to advise all family members who that is and what their phone number is. Also advise the emergency contact of the numbers for all family members. Family members can then call this contact person to check in – the contact will in turn get in touch with all other family members to advise of your situation. Determine in advance where you will take shelter should a tornado warning be issued. Remember:

- Fruit or storm cellars or basements offer the best protection.
- If underground shelter is not available, get to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- Stay away from all windows, doors and outside walls. Stay in the center of the room and away from corners which attract and stockpile flying debris.
- If in a high rise building, get to the bottom floor and stay in an interior room or hallway.
- A vehicle, mobile home or trailer provides NO protection. Plan to go quickly to a building with a strong foundation, if possible.
- If shelter is not available, you will be safest if you lie in a flat location such as a ditch. DO NOT GET UNDER AN OVERPASS OR BRIDGE. You are much safer in a low location.
- Plan to stay in the shelter location until the danger is fully passed.

3. **Be informed.** Become familiar with the terms used to identify tornado hazards:

- A **tornado watch** means a tornado is possible in your area.
- A **tornado warning** is when a tornado is actually occurring in your area, take shelter immediately. There is no time to put anything together, just get to your shelter area.