



Tornado Safety: Are You Prepared?

On an average year, approximately 1,200 tornadoes cause 70 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the United States. In 2011, there were 1,688 confirmed tornadoes with 552 deaths and \$30 billion in damage, making last year the costliest tornado season on record. This year alone has already seen tornado warnings occurring in each month with 54 fatalities in 7 states.

What will you do in case a tornado is coming your way? Are you prepared? In order to be so, it is important to have the following supplies on hand in the event of a disaster:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Portable, battery operated weather radios with extra batteries
- Emergency food and water
- Complete and accurate EMPLOYEE/VISITORS roster
- First aid supplies
- Written instructions for turning off utilities (e.g. shutting off supplied natural gas)

If you are caught outdoors:

- If possible, get inside a building
- If indoor shelter is not possible, lie in a ditch or low-lying ravine (be aware of the potential for flooding)
- Crouch near a strong building
- Use arms to protect head and neck

If you are caught in a vehicle:

- Never try to out-drive a tornado! They can often change direction and lift vehicles up into the air
- Immediately seek shelter in a building
- If there is not time to get indoors, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area (beware of the potential for flooding)
- Use arms to protect head and neck

After the tornado has passed, be sure to:

- Conduct an employee/visitor head count
- Call 911 if injuries have occurred and administer first aid as needed
- Don't try to move any seriously injured persons unless immediate danger is present
- Turn on radio/television to get emergency information
- Stay out of damaged buildings
- Use telephones only for emergency calls
- Clean up spilled medications and hazardous materials
- Leave the building if you smell gas or chemicals
- Take pictures of damage—contact your insurance carrier and ECRM

The National Weather Service has placed Doppler radars across the country which detects air movement toward or away from radar. Storm spotters, law enforcement and eyewitnesses will report tornado activity to local media for storm tracking updates. Stay alert during a Severe Storm WATCH and take shelter immediately during a Tornado WARNING. At work, set up alerts on computers and maintain severe weather radios throughout facility.

After all, a little preparation now will increase your chance of survival when a tornado is spotted and you only have seconds to respond!

Sources: National Weather Service (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration)
American Red Cross

<http://www.tornadoproject.com/safety/safety/html>