Tornadoes

Tornadoes can form with little warning, so know your shelter spot before the sky turns.

BEFORE THE SEASON

- Pick a shelter spot now and practice going there, with pets if there is time.
- Turn on Wireless Emergency Alerts on every phone, and keep a battery-backed NOAA Weather Radio.
- Ask your county how its sirens signal a watch and a warning.

WATCH AND WARNING

- **Watch:** tornadoes are possible in and near the area. Review your plan and be ready to move fast.
- **Warning:** a tornado has been sighted or shown on radar. Go to shelter right away.
- Tornadoes can form with no warning. Take cover if you see a funnel cloud or green sky, or hear a loud roar.

AT HOME

- Go to a basement, or a windowless interior room on the lowest floor. Stay away from windows and outside walls.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms, and get under something sturdy if you can.

MOBILE HOME, CAR, OR OUTSIDE

- **Mobile or manufactured home:** do not stay in it. Go to a sturdy building nearby, ideally one with a basement.
- **Outside:** get into a sturdy building. Sheds and tents are not safe. If none, lie flat in a low spot and cover your head.
- **In a car:** do not try to outrun it. Drive to the closest shelter if you can. If not, stay buckled with your head below the windows.
- Do not shelter under an overpass or bridge.

SCHOOL, WORK, AND LARGE BUILDINGS

- Follow your building's drill and go to its shelter area. Avoid cafeterias, gyms and other large open rooms.
- In a mall or theater, go to the lowest level, away from windows.

AFTER THE STORM

- Stay out of damaged buildings until officials say they are safe. Near debris, wear sturdy shoes and gloves.
- Stay clear of downed power lines. If you smell gas, do not use matches, lighters or light switches.
- Run generators outdoors only, 20 feet from windows, doors and vents, and use a battery CO detector.
- Text instead of calling, and keep a radio on, since more storms can follow.

For our household

Our shelter spot

Second spot if that one is blocked

Our alert source

Where the weather radio is kept

Sources: National Weather Service, Tornado Safety and NOAA Weather Radio pages; CDC, Tornado Safety (preparing, during, after); Ready.gov, Tornadoes. Checked October 2026. Official sources differ on driving away from a tornado, so follow local officials.