

Tornado Shelter Preparation

It's a date that I'm sure all of us will remember for years to come. On the afternoon of May 16, 2025 an intense mile-wide tornado was on the ground for 27 minutes, covering 23 miles, leaving a trail of destruction in its pathway. It has been estimated that nearly 5,000 structures were damaged, causing roughly \$1.6 billion in damage, while claiming the lives of 5 individuals and injuring 38 others.

It's a somber reminder that Tornado Safety impacts us all, and it's important to take precautions to protect yourself and property.



1. Know Where to Take Shelter

You and your family could be anywhere when a tornado strikes- at home, work, school, or in a vehicle. The key to surviving a tornado and reducing the risk of injury lies in the planning, preparing, and practicing what you and your family will do if a tornado strikes.

2. Avoid Shelter Where Flying Debris is Prevalent

Flying debris causes most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others. AVOID WINDOWS. Exploding windows can injure and kill.

3. Get to the Most Interior and Lowest Part of the Structure

The safest place of a home is the most-interior part of a basement. If there is no basement, go to an inside room, without windows, on the lowest floor. This could be a center hallway, bathroom, or closet. Avoid taking shelter where there are heavy objects, such as pianos or refrigerators on the floor that is directly above you- there is a potential they could fall through the floor.

4. Take Cover

For added protection, get under something sturdy, such as a heavy table or workbench if it is on the same level. If possible, cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag, or mattress to protect your head. Even covering your head with your hands, like we were taught in grade school, can still be helpful.

5. In a Vehicle or Mobile Home?

Find a sturdy building or a low-lying area, but do not shelter under an overpass. Do not try and outrun a tornado. If you're unable to make it to a safer shelter, either get down in your vehicle and cover your head or leave your vehicle and seek shelter in a low-lying area such as a ditch or ravine.