



# Severe Weather Safety Tips: Tornado

Provided by  
Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM)



## Before a Tornado

- Have a family tornado plan in place and practice a family tornado drill at least once a year.
- Have a pre-determined place to meet after a disaster.
- Learn the signs of a tornado: dark, greenish sky; large hail; dark, low clouds; and loud roaring sounds.
- When a tornado watch is issued, practice your drill and check your safety supplies.
- Increase your situational awareness by monitoring the weather on weather.gov, watching local TV, or listening to NOAA Weather Radio.
- Flying debris is the greatest danger in tornadoes; so store protective coverings (e.g., mattress, sleeping bags, thick blankets, etc) in or next to your shelter space, ready to use on a few seconds notice.
- Tornado rule of thumb: ***Put as many walls and floors between you and the tornado as possible!***
- If you are planning to build a house, consider an underground tornado shelter or an interior "safe room"
- In a **mobile home**: **GET OUT!** Go to a neighbors, underground shelter, or a nearby permanent structure. Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes.



## During a Tornado

- Wear a bicycle or motorcycle helmet to protect your head and neck or cover your head with a thick book.
- In a **house with a basement**: Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under some type of sturdy protection (heavy table or work bench), or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor and crush you.
- In a **house without a basement, a dorm, or an apartment**: Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, in a small interior room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell, or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down. A bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding (mattress, blankets, etc.), to protect against falling debris in case the roof and ceiling fail.
- In a **car or truck**: If you are caught by extreme winds or flying debris, park the car as quickly and safely as possible - out of the traffic lanes. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges.
- In the **open outdoors**: lie flat and face-down on low ground, protecting the back of your head with your arms. Get as far away from trees and cars as you can.

## After a Tornado

- Remain calm and alert, and listen to the radio or TV for instructions from authorities.
- Keep your family together and wait for emergency personnel to arrive.
- Carefully render aid to those who are injured.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Watch your step to avoid broken glass, nails, and other sharp objects.
- Stay out of any heavily damaged houses or buildings.
- Do not use matches or lighters, there might be leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby.

