

# HAZARDS AND THREATS

## TORNADOES AND TWISTERS

### DURING A TORNADO

#### **Signs of an Approaching Storm**

- Some tornadoes strike rapidly, without time for a Tornado Warning, and sometimes without a thunderstorm in the vicinity. When you are watching an evolving tornado, it is important to know that you can't depend on seeing a funnel; cloud of rain may block your view. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:
  - A dark or green-colored sky.
  - A large, dark, low lying cloud.
  - Large hail.
  - A loud roar that sounds like a freight train.

If you witness or notice any of these weather conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and television stations or to a National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio.

#### **Sighting a Funnel Cloud**

If you see a funnel cloud nearby, take shelter immediately. However, if you spot a tornado that is far away, help provide situational awareness information in addition alert others to the hazard by reporting it to the newsroom or local radio or television station before taking shelter. If you believe that you might be in danger, seek shelter immediately.

#### **Taking Shelter**

Your family could be anywhere when a tornado strikes (at home, at work, at school, or in the car). Discuss with your family where the best tornado shelters are and how family members can protect themselves from flying and falling debris.

The key to surviving a tornado and reducing the risk of injury lies in planning, preparing, and practicing what you and your family will do if a tornado strikes. 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.

## **Sheltering-in-Place at Home**

Pick a place in the home where family members can gather if a tornado is headed your way. One basic rule is to avoid windows. An exploding window can injure or kill.

The safest place in the home is the interior parts 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.

For additional protection, get under something sturdy such as a heavy table or workbench. If possible, cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag, or mattress, and protect your head with anything available—even your hands.

Avoid taking shelter where there are heavy objects, such as pianos or refrigerators, on the area of the floor that is directly above you. They could fall through the floor if the tornado strikes your house.

## **Shelter-in-Place in a Mobile Home**

Do not stay in a mobile home during a tornado. Mobile homes can turn over during strong winds. Even mobile homes with a tie-down system can't withstand the force of tornado winds.

Plan ahead. If you live in a mobile home, go to a nearby building, preferably one with a basement. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine, or culvert and shield your head with your hands.

If you live in a tornado-prone area, encourage your mobile home community to build a tornado shelter.

## **Sheltering-in-Place while on the Road**

The least desirable place to be during a tornado is in a motor vehicle. Cars, buses, and trucks are easily tossed by tornado winds.

Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car. If you see a tornado, stop your vehicle and get out. Don't get under your vehicle. Follow the directions for seeking shelter outdoors.

## **Sheltering-in-Place when you are Outdoors**

If you are caught outside during a tornado and there is no adequate shelter immediately available, you are recommended to do the following:

- Avoid areas with many trees.
- Avoid vehicles.

- Lie flat in a gully, ditch, or low spot on the ground.
- Protect your head with an object or with your arms.

### **Danger: Stay Away from Long-Span Building**

A long-span building, such as shopping mall, theater or gymnasium is especially dangerous because the roof structure is usually supported solely by the outside walls. Most such buildings hit by tornadoes can't withstand the enormous pressure. They will simply collapse.

If you are in a long-span building during a tornado, stay away from windows. Get to the lowest level of the building--the basement if possible—and away from the windows.

If there is no time to get a tornado shelter or to a lower level, try to get under a door frame or get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. For instance, in a department store, get up against heavy shelving or counters. In a theater, get under the seats. Remember to protect your head.

### **Office Buildings, Schools, Hospitals, Churches, and Other Public Buildings**

Extra care is required in offices, schools, hospitals or any building where a large group of people is concentrated in a small area. The exterior walls of the aforementioned buildings and structures will often have large windows that may break, shatter and become dangerous due to projectiles in the event of a tornado.

#### **If you are in any of these buildings, you are encouraged to do the following:**

- Move away from windows and glass doorways.
- Go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest possible floor.
- Don't use elevators because the power may fail, leaving you trapped.
- Protect your head and make yourself as small as a target as possible by crouching down.

### **Shelter for People with Disability, Access and Functional Needs**

Advance planning is especially important if you require assistance to reach shelter from an approaching storm.

- If you are in a wheelchair, get away from windows and go to an interior room of the house. If possible, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Drop, Cover and Hold On as remember to protect your head and neck area. You can use a blanket or pillow that may protect you from falling objects.

- If you are outside and a tornado is approaching, get into a ditch or gully. If possible, lie flat and cover your head with your arms.

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