

Tornado/Thunderstorm Safety

Preparing for a tornado / thunderstorm:

- **Plan ahead.** Be sure everyone in your household knows **where to go** and **what to do** in case of a **tornado or thunderstorm warning**.
- Know the **safest location** for shelter in your **home, workplace, and school**. Load-bearing walls near the center of the basement or lowest level generally provide the greatest protection.
- Know the location of **designated shelter areas** in local **public facilities**, such as schools, shopping centers, and other public buildings.
- Have **emergency supplies** on hand, including a battery-operated radio, flashlight, and a supply of fresh batteries, first aid kit, water, and cell phone.
- Make an **inventory** of household furnishings and other possessions. Supplement it with photographs of each room. Keep in a safe place.

What to do when a tornado / thunderstorm warning is issued for your area:

- Quickly **move to shelter** in the basement or lowest floor of a permanent structure.
- In **homes and small buildings**, go to the basement and get under something sturdy. If no basement is available, go to an interior part of the home on the lowest level. A good rule of thumb is to put as many walls between you and the tornado as possible.
- In **schools, hospitals, and public places**, move to designated shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floors are generally best.
- **Stay away** from windows, doors, and outside walls. Broken glass and wind blown projectiles cause more injuries and deaths than collapsed buildings. Protect your head with a pillow, blanket, or mattress.
- **Mobile homes and vehicles** offer virtually no shelter. Leave them and go to the nearest shelter.
- If there is **no shelter nearby**, the **best alternative** is to find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles, but not in a place subject to flooding. Shield your head with your arms.
- If you are **boating or swimming**, get to land and shelter immediately.
- Follow the **30/30 Lightning Safety Rule**. Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur greater than 10 miles from any rainfall.
- If you feel your **skin tingle** or **hair stand on end**, lightning may be about to strike. Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Minimize contact with the ground.

- **Telephone lines** and **metal pipes** can **conduct electricity**. Unplug appliances not necessary for receiving weather information. Use plug-in telephones only in an emergency.

After a tornado / thunderstorm:

- **Inspect** your property and motor vehicles for damage. Write down the date and list damages for insurance purposes. Check for **electrical problems** and **gas leaks** and report them to the utility company at once.
- **Watch out for fallen power lines**. Stay out of **damaged buildings** until you are sure they are safe and will not collapse. Secure your property from further damage or theft.
- Use only approved or chlorinated supplies of **drinking water**. Check food supplies.

Anytime:

- **Listen** for NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, or local radio, television, and cable stations for the latest weather updates. Make sure your NOAA Weather Radio has a battery backup.
- For NOAA Weather Radio information, including a station near you, see the NOAA Weather Radio page on the Internet at weather.gov/nwr/. A number of related publications produced by the National Weather Service, American Red Cross, and Federal Emergency Management Agency are available online at weather.gov/om/brochures.shtml