

TORNADOES

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent, destructive storms and can devastate an area in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, striking the ground with whirling winds with speeds of up to 300 MPH or more. A tornado spins like a top and may sound like a train or like the engines on an airplane. Tornadoes normally travel for up to 10 miles before they subside. In Florida, they occur most frequently during the months of April, May and June.

What To Do Before A Tornado Strikes

1. Know the location of designated public shelters within your community and around your work area.
2. Ensure everyone in your home knows, in advance, where to go and what to do in case of a tornado (emergency assembly areas).
3. Inventory and maintain a database or listing of your household furnishings and valuable possessions. Keep this inventory, along with other valuable papers in plastic, zip type bags, stored in a safe place.
4. Learn the terminology used by the weather forecasters to describe tornado threats.

Tornado Terminology:

Tornado Watch: This advisory indicates that conditions are favorable for the formation of a tornado.

Tornado Warning: This advisory indicates that a tornado has been sighted in your area, and you should take protective actions.

What To Do During A Tornado

1. Whenever severe thunderstorms threaten your area, listen to radio and television announcements for updates and instructions.
2. When a tornado has been sighted in your area (Tornado Warning) take cover immediately.
3. If you are in a house or small building, go to the interior part of the structure on the lower level (closet, interior hallway, or bathroom without windows). If these shelters are not available, seek shelter under something sturdy, such as a heavy table or desk and remain in place until the emergency is over.

4. In schools, nursing homes and shopping centers (Malls) go to the pre-designated shelter area. Interior hallways on the lowest floor are the safest; avoid open spaces.
5. In multi-story buildings, go to small interior rooms or hallways on the lowest floor possible.

Fujiti Tornado Scale

Source FEMA

SIZE	FUNNEL SPEED	DAMAGE
DAMAGE ASSESSMENT		
F0	40 to 72 MPH	Light Damage
Branches broken from trees; chimneys damaged; shallow-rooted trees pushed over; signs and billboards damaged.		
F1	73 to 112 MPH	Moderate Damage
Surface peeled off roofs; mobile homes pushed off of foundations or overturned; moving vehicles pushed off roadways.		
F2	113 to 157 MPH	Considerable Damage
Roofs torn off frame houses; mobile homes demolished; boxcars pushed over; large trees snapped or uprooted; light-object missiles generated.		
F3	158 to 206 MPH	Severe Damage
Roofs and walls torn off well-constructed homes; trains overturned; most trees in forest uprooted; heavy cars lifted off ground and thrown.		
F4	207 to 260 MPH	Devastating Damage
Well-constructed homes leveled; structures with weak foundations blown off some distance; cars thrown and large missiles generated.		
F5	261 to 318 MPH	Incredible Damage
Strong frame homes lifted off foundations and carried large distance to disintegrate; automobile size missiles fly through air in excess of 300 feet; trees debarked; top soil and roadway surfaces removed.		

6. In a vehicle, mobile home or trailer, get out immediately and seek shelter in a building that offers better protection.
7. If there is no shelter nearby, lay flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert and protect your head with your hands.
8. DO NOT attempt to flee from a tornado in your car or any other type of vehicle. They are no match for the swift, erratic movement of the storm(s).

What To Do After A Tornado

1. Use extreme caution when entering homes and other facilities damaged by the storm.
2. Look for broken gas lines, downed power lines, and damaged utilities and report them to the proper authorities.
3. Check for injured personnel. Do not attempt to move people who are seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger. Call for medical help immediately.
4. Stay away from disaster areas unless you are providing first aid or medical assistance.
5. Remain calm. This may be difficult, but remember that others may be looking at you for moral support.
6. Volunteer your skills and services when you can and be ready to begin recovery operations.

