



Tornado Preparedness Tips

It is imperative that you have necessary preparations in place to be prepared for a Tornado. Unlike Hurricanes, Tornadoes can occur at any point during the year (especially March 1st – August 30th). Although preparing in advance is a small time-investment, having everything in order will allow you to devote time to last minute items should you find yourself under a Tornado Watch or Warning.

One good way to ease this stress is to have some plans laid in advance. Doing so will help maintain peace of mind of knowing you are prepared for what is to come. It is not uncommon for local groceries and hardware stores to run out of supplies in anticipation of the storm, so avoid being last minute in your preparations.

It is important to understand the difference between a Tornado Warning and a Tornado Watch. The following definitions are adapted from the National Weather Service:

- **Tornado Watch** – Due to current weather conditions, a tornado is possible near your area. The Watch area is often large, covering numerous counties or even states.
- **Tornado Warning** – A tornado has been sighted or indicated by the weather radar, meaning danger in your area is imminent.

Ideally, everyone should have a Tornado-appropriate room in their home. These rooms typically are basements, garages, or interior rooms on the first floor. At a minimum, the room should have no windows and be anchored to the ground. This is the room that you should keep your emergency supplies:

1. Make sure to inventory your valuables. Make lists and videotape. Then keep this list in a safety deposit box. This includes property deeds, marriage / birth certificates, social security cards, stocks and bonds and other portfolio information, passports, wills, medical records and insurance policies.
2. Make a reference list of everything you would absolutely want to take with you should you have to evacuate your home. Include photo albums, important documents, files,

jewelry and other precious mementos. You will surely forget something if you had to get out quickly.

3. Compile a list of contacts including family and friends that you want to stay in touch with throughout the storm. Decide on who will take what roles, and where and when to meet should phone service be out. Many people will use an out of town contact that may be easier to reach than a local one.
4. Know your city's closest Tornado evacuation centers. Should you be away from home when the storm strikes, be sure to know safe places in which you can find shelter.
5. If your area is placed under a Tornado Watch, make sure you wash all dishes and run the dishwasher. Also make sure all the laundry is washed and clean sheets and towels are being used. You don't know when power may be restored, and this will avoid you running out of clean clothes too soon.
6. Be sure to have cash on you. You may not be able to find an operating ATM after the storm.
7. Fill up your car with gas. Purchase a portable tank to bring extra gas. Evacuation traffic is slow.
8. Make sure you have adequate supplies such as food and water (1 gallon per day, per person) for everyone in your household. Don't forget the manual can opener! A good rule of thumb is to have enough supplies to last you for seven days.
9. Be sure you have plenty of supplies for baby including formula (powdered), diapers, clean bottles, wipes, and baby food.
10. Don't forget to have all medications you use or may use filled and readily available.
11. Battery powered radio or television and flashlights. Don't forget batteries for each.
12. Purchase a car charger for your phone.
13. Don't forget to make arrangements for your pets and to have adequate supplies for them as well.
14. Also, take adequate measures to account for climate changes.

The summer is a perfect time to tackle any impending projects you have been putting off. Taking just an hour out of your day to ensure you and your family are prepared for a Tornado will ensure safety and confidence during a potentially dangerous situation.