

Tornado Information

Tornadoes: Tornadoes are incredibly violent local storms that extend to the ground with whirling winds that may exceed 300 miles per hour.

Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can uproot trees and buildings, and turn harmless objects into deadly missiles in a matter of seconds. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.

Tornadoes can occur in any state, but occur more frequently in the Midwest, Southeast, and Southwest. They occur with little or no warning.

Planning Considerations:

The following are considerations should be used when planning for tornadoes:

- Ask your local emergency management office about the community's tornado warning system.
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup. Listen for tornado watches and warnings.
 - **Tornado Watch-** Tornadoes are likely. Be ready to take shelter. Stay tuned to radio and television stations for additional information.
 - **Tornado Warning-** A tornado has been sighted in the area or is indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately.
- Establish procedures to inform personnel when tornado warnings are posted.
- Work with a structural engineer or architect to designate shelter areas in your facility. Ask your local emergency management office or National Weather Service office for guidance.
- Consider the amount of space you will need. Adults require about six square feet of space; nursing home and hospital patients require more.
- The best protection in a tornado is usually an underground area. If an underground area is not available, consider:
 - Small interior rooms on the lowest floor and without windows.
 - Hallways on the lowest floor away from doors and windows.
 - Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead.
 - Protected areas away from doors and windows.

Note: Auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums that are covered with a flat, wide-span roof are not considered safe.

- Make plans for evacuating personnel away from lightweight modular offices or mobile home-size buildings. These structures offer no protection from tornadoes.
- Conduct tornado drills.
- Once in shelter, personnel should protect their heads with their arms and crouch down.