

# Tornado Safety

**T**ornadoes – rotating, funnel-shaped columns of wind that touch the ground -- are among the most violent atmospheric phenomenon on the planet.<sup>1</sup> Annually, about 1,200 tornadoes hit the U.S.,<sup>2</sup> with an average of 132 touching down in Texas – more than in any other state.<sup>3</sup> In the most violent tornadoes, winds can reach as high as 300 miles per hour.<sup>4</sup> These storms bring extreme danger and plenty of damage in their path. **Advanced warning** is the key to saving lives. Keep a backup battery communication system, such as a **weather alert radio**, available to listen to storm advisories, and **be ready to act**.



## Tornado Alerts

The [Storm Prediction Center](#) of the National Weather Service (NWS) issues tornado alerts as either a tornado watch or a tornado warning.



## Tornado Watch

### **Tornado Watch: Tornado Possible! Be Prepared!**

A tornado watch means thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes are possible at locations in the watch area. The watch area is often large, covering multiple counties or even states. Prepare to act if a tornado approaches.

- Listen to local weather advisories.
- Remain alert.
- Review [emergency plans](#).
- Bring in or secure outdoor objects that could become projectiles.
- Check [supplies](#) such as batteries, flashlights, water, non-perishable food, and medications.
- Discuss the location of a safe room.



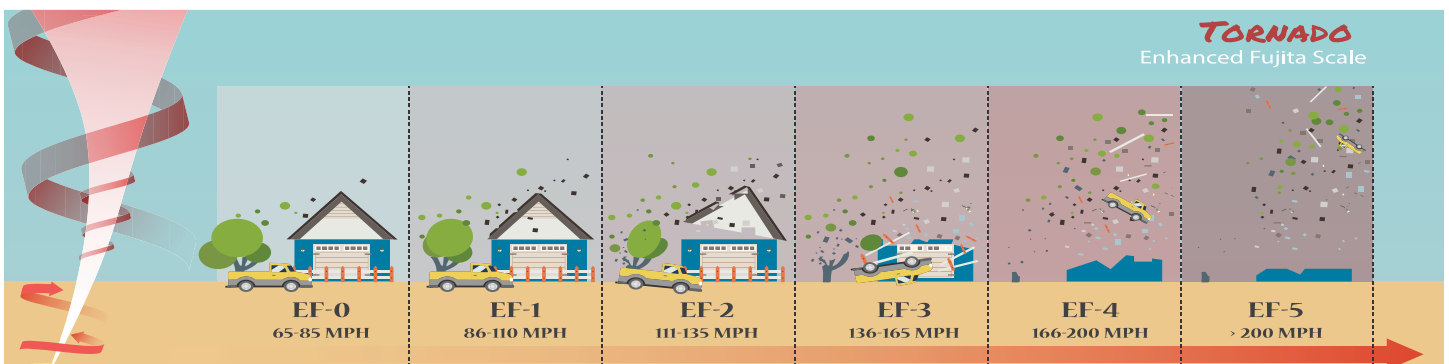
## Tornado Warning

### **Tornado Warning: Tornado Expected! Seek Shelter!**

A tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar, a [trained spotter](#), or a law enforcement officer. The [local NWS forecast office](#) issues tornado warnings, usually to a smaller area such as a city or county. People in the warning area need to **take immediate action** to prevent the loss of life.

- Find shelter in a permanent building immediately. If in a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, leave to find a tornado shelter or other suitable structure as soon as possible.
- Move to an interior room on the lowest level of the building. Basements, bathrooms, and closets are often the safest and strongest rooms.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Never open windows. It is a myth that opening windows equalizes the building's inside pressure. On the contrary, opening windows lets wind into the building, potentially shaking the internal supports and weakening the structure.<sup>5</sup>
- Use blankets, towels, or other protective materials as cover from flying debris.
- Never stop under bridges or overpasses. These offer no protection from tornadic winds or flying debris.
- If no substantial structure is nearby, lie flat, face down in the nearest ditch or depression. Use hands to cover the head to protect against flying debris.

For more information on storm safety, download any of the Natural Disaster Preparedness and Recovery [publications](#) from the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation-Workplace Safety.



## References

- <sup>1</sup>The National Severe Storm Laboratory. "Severe Weather 101 – Tornadoes." Website. <https://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes/>. Accessed 07/21/2021.
- <sup>2</sup>The National Severe Storm Laboratory. "Severe Weather 101 – Tornadoes." Website. <https://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes/>. Accessed 07/21/2021.
- <sup>3</sup>Texas Almanac. "Texas is Tornado Capital." Website. <https://texasalmanac.com/topics/environment/texas-tornado-capital>. Accessed 07/21/2021.
- <sup>4</sup>The National Severe Storm Laboratory. "Severe Weather 101 – Tornadoes." Website. <https://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes/>. Accessed 07/21/2021.
- <sup>5</sup>National Weather Service. "Tornado Safety." Website. [https://www.weather.gov/media/lx/wcm/Tuesday\\_16.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/lx/wcm/Tuesday_16.pdf). Accessed July 20, 2021.



[www.txsafetyatwork.com](http://www.txsafetyatwork.com)

**1-800-252-7031, Option 2**

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