

Tornado Checklist

By John F. Smith

- Tornado Preparation
 - Have storm shutters installed on all the windows of your home.
 - Have a roofing contractor make sure that your roof and gutters are attached firmly to your home
 - Have any dead or diseased trees completely removed.
 - During any storm, listen to local news or weather radio to stay informed about watches and warnings.
 - Know your community's warning system.
 - Pick a 'safe room' in your home where household members and pets may gather during a tornado.
 - Have the walls and ceiling joists reinforced in your safe room.
 - Practice periodic tornado drills.
 - Consider having your 'safe room' reinforced.
 - Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged limbs from trees.
 - Move or secure lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
 - Watch for tornado danger signs: dark, often greenish clouds, wall cloud, cloud of debris, large hail, funnel cloud or roaring noise.
- When a Tornado is Threatening
 - The safest place to be is an underground shelter, basement, or safe room.
 - Remember that mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes.
 - Abandon mobile homes immediately.
 - Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.
 - Do not wait until you see the tornado.
 - Go to the nearest sturdy building or shelter immediately.
 - If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a basement, shelter, or sturdy building.
 - If you cannot get to shelter, get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt, and try to drive at right angles to the storm movement and out of the path.
 - If strong winds and flying debris occur while you are driving, pull over and park, keeping seat belts on and the engine running.

- If you are unable to get to a building or vehicle, lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area and cover your head with your hands.
- Plan to stay in the shelter location until the danger has passed.
- After a Tornado
 - Continue listening to weather radio for updated information and instructions.
 - Return to home only when authorities say it is safe.
 - Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes when examining home for damage.
 - Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines.
 - Stay out of damaged buildings.
 - If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out of the building quickly.
 - Take pictures of damage.
 - Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
 - Keep all of your animals under your direct control.
 - Check for injuries.
 - If you are trained, provide first aid to persons in need.