

TORNADO TERMINOLOGY

Tornado Watch

Weather conditions could lead to the formation of severe storms and tornadoes. **BE PREPARED:** Know your safe location. Be ready to act quickly if a Warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.

Tornado Warning

A tornado has been spotted or indicated by weather radar, meaning a tornado is occurring or expected soon. **TAKE ACTION:** There is imminent danger to life and property. Immediately seek refuge in the safest location possible.

Tornado Emergency

An exceedingly rare situation with a severe threat to human life and catastrophic damage due to a confirmed violent tornado. **TAKE ACTION:** There is imminent danger to life and property. Immediately seek refuge in the safest location possible.



EF4

WIND: 166-200 mph
DAMAGE: DEVASTATING

EF2

WIND: 111-135 mph
DAMAGE: CONSIDERABLE

EF0

WIND: 65-85 mph
DAMAGE: MINOR

Enhanced Fujita Scale for Tornadoes



Six Damage Categories

EF3

WIND: 136-165 mph
DAMAGE: SEVERE

EF1

WIND: 86-110 mph
DAMAGE: MODERATE

EF5

WIND: 200+ mph
DAMAGE: INCREDIBLE

Violent

Strong

Weak



spc.noaa.gov
weather.gov/safety/tornado

Know Where to Go

When Sheltering from a Tornado



Top floor rooms
DO NOT protect you.

If you have no basement,
move to an interior room
with no windows.

Exterior rooms and rooms with
windows DO NOT protect you.

NO PLACE OUTSIDE
is safe from a tornado.

Quickly move to your
basement and bring your
emergency supply kit.



[weather.gov/safety/tornado](https://www.weather.gov/safety/tornado)

Tornado Sheltering Guidelines

Seek the best available refuge area **immediately** when a Tornado Warning is issued.
Your chance of surviving a tornado is excellent if you follow these guidelines.

WORST OPTIONS

Mobile homes

Vehicles

Underneath a
highway overpass

BAD OPTIONS

Large open rooms
like gymnasiums

Manufactured housing

GOOD OPTIONS

Interior room
of a well-constructed
home or building

Basement

BEST OPTIONS

Above or below ground
Tornado Storm Shelter
(NSSA/ICC 500 compliant)*

Specifically-designed
FEMA Safe Room*

Find another option



Stay in place until all clear



WHAT TO DO DURING A **TORNADO WATCH**



When a Tornado Watch is issued, make sure the following items are stored in your safe place.

- Helmets, pillows, or even a mattress to protect your head from falling and flying debris
- Shoes to protect your feet from broken glass and other sharp objects
- A whistle or noise-making device to signal for help after the storm passes
- Baby formula, diapers, and other necessary items for your children
- Pet carriers, leashes, and other pet supplies



For more information, visit:
[weather.gov/safety/tornado](https://www.weather.gov/safety/tornado)