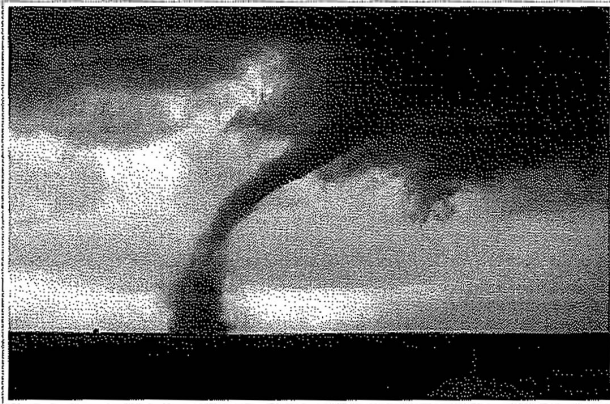




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# Staying Safe in a Tornado

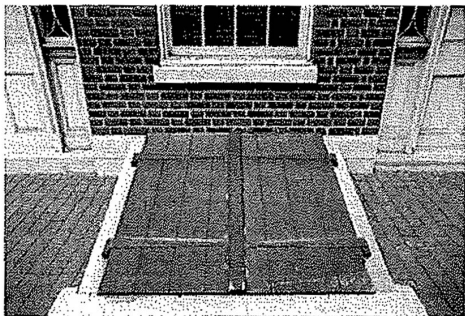


To stay safe during a tornado, prepare a plan and an emergency kit, stay aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms, know the best places to shelter both indoors and outdoors, and always protect yourself from injury, especially your head.

Tornadoes continue to impact locations across the country every year, bringing massive winds and destruction of properties in their paths.

The 2022 tornado season claimed the lives of 23 individuals, injured hundreds more, and caused billions of dollars in damage. The deadliest outbreak occurred in March with 12 deaths. Historically, most tornadoes occur in spring; however, tornadoes can happen at any time. While the likelihood of a tornado occurring on a December day in the United States is 12-15% (compared to 90% in early June), in recent years, tornado outbreaks during winter months have been deadly.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) [\[1\]](#) there is no guaranteed safety during a tornado. Even the possibility of a tornado must be taken seriously. Although the most violent tornadoes can level and blow away almost any house and those within it, extremely violent EF5 tornadoes (those with wind speeds of 200 MPH or more) are rare. It's been over eight years since the last catastrophic EF5 tornado struck the United States, occurring in Moore, Oklahoma, on May 20, 2013. Most tornadoes are much weaker. You can survive a tornado if you follow safety precautions. Here are three important tips to help keep you and your family safe.



Be sure you and your loved ones know what makes a safe shelter. (See our infographic for a quick summary of tips).

## TIP ①: Be prepared.

The best way to stay safe during a tornado is to be prepared with the following items:

- Fresh batteries and a battery-operated TV, radio, or internet-enabled device to listen to the latest emergency weather information
- A tornado emergency plan including access to a safe shelter for yourself, your family, people with special needs, and your pets
- An emergency kit (including water, non-perishable food, and medication)
- A list of important information, including telephone numbers

Be sure your children know what a tornado is, what tornado watches and warnings are, what county or parish they live in (warnings are typically issued by county or parish), and what makes a location a safe shelter, whether at home or at school.

## TIP ②: Stay aware of weather conditions.

To protect yourself and your loved ones from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or a NOAA weather radio station for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:

- A dark or green-colored sky
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud
- Large hail
- A loud roar that sounds like a freight train

If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and stay tuned to local radio and TV stations, a NOAA weather radio station, or the internet.

## TIP ③: Know where to shelter.

Falling and flying debris causes most injuries and deaths during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.

- Go to the basement or an inside room without windows on the lowest floor (bathroom, closet, center hallway).
- If possible, avoid sheltering in any room with windows.
- For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
- Do not stay in a mobile home.

If you are outside or in a mobile home, find a nearby building, preferably with a basement. If you are in a car, do not try to outrun a tornado, but instead find the nearest sturdy building.

No one can know a tornado's strength before it touches down, so keep up with local weather information, especially when thunderstorms are forecasted. Prepare your home and family for the possibility of a tornado. Moving to a shelter quickly is easier when everyone knows where to go, whether in your home or outdoors. Following these tips will give you the best chance for staying safe.

Learn more about how to stay safe during a tornado.

### More Information

- Tornadoes