

Actions to take during a Tornado or other Severe Weather

Your family could be anywhere when a tornado strikes--at home, at work, at school, or in the car. Discuss with your family where the best tornado shelters are and how family members can protect themselves from flying and falling debris.

Office Buildings, Schools, Hospitals, Churches, and Other Public Buildings

Extra care is required in offices, schools, hospitals, or any building where a large group of people is concentrated in a small area. The exterior walls of such buildings often have large windows. If you are in any of these buildings--

- Move away from windows and glass doorways.
- Go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest possible floor.
- Do not use elevators because the power may fail, leaving you trapped.
- Protect your head and make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down.

Long-Span Buildings

- A long-span building, such as a shopping mall, theater, or gymnasium, is especially dangerous because the roof structure is usually supported solely by the outside walls. Most such buildings hit by tornados cannot withstand the enormous pressure. They simply collapse.
- If you are in a long-span building during a tornado, stay away from windows. Get to the lowest level of the building--the basement if possible--and away from the windows.
- If there is no time to get to a tornado shelter or to a lower level, try to get under a door frame or get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. For instance, in a department store, get up against heavy shelving or counters. In a theater, get under the seats. Remember to protect your head.

Outdoors

If you are caught outside during a tornado and there is no adequate shelter immediately available:

- * Avoid vehicles
- * Lie down flat in a gully, ditch, or low spot on the ground.
- * Avoid areas with many trees
- * Protect your head with an object or with your arms.

Shelter for People with Special Needs

Advance planning is especially important if you require assistance to reach shelter from an approaching storm (refer to CDC website for more specific Info: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tornadoes/during.asp>).

- If you are in a wheelchair, get away from windows and go to an interior room of the house. If possible, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Do cover your head with anything available, even your hands.
- If you are unable to move from a bed or a chair and assistance is not available, protect yourself from falling objects by covering up with blankets and pillows.
- If you are outside and a tornado is approaching, get into a ditch or gully. If possible, lie flat and cover your head with your arms.