



## Tornado Safety

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### What to Do During a Tornado WATCH

- **Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or television stations for updated information.** Tornadoes can change direction, intensity, and speed very quickly.
- **Be alert to changing weather conditions.** Tornadoes accompany severe thunderstorms, and weather conditions can change rapidly. Large hail, blowing debris, or the sound of an approaching tornado may alert you. Many people say approaching tornadoes sound like a freight train.

### What to Do During a Tornado WARNING

- **Listen to a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio, regular radio, or television for updated information.** If the electricity should go out, you will still be able to receive emergency information.
- **If you are inside, go to your safe place to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects.** Tornadoes can change direction, intensity, and speed very quickly. The tornado may be approaching your area.
- **Get under a piece of sturdy furniture, such as a workbench or heavy table, and hold on to it.** Sturdy furniture will help protect you from falling debris. If tornado wind enters the room and the object moves, holding on with one hand will help you move with it, keeping you protected.
- **Use your other arm and hand to protect your head and neck from falling or flying objects.** Your head and neck are more easily injured than other parts of your body. Protect them as much as you can.
- **Stay away from windows.** Opening windows allows damaging winds to enter the structure. Leave the windows alone; instead, immediately go to a safe place. It is a myth that tornadoes cause houses to explode due to changes in air pressure. Flying debris can shatter glass. Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.
- **If you're outside in a car or in a mobile home, go immediately to the basement of a nearby sturdy building.** Sturdy buildings are the safest place to be. Tornado winds can blow large objects, including cars and mobile homes, hundreds of feet away. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift up a car or truck and toss it through the air; never try to out-drive a tornado. Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable. A mobile home can overturn very easily even if precautions have been taken to tie down the unit.
- **If there is no building nearby, lie flat in a low spot.** Use your arms and hands to protect your head. Tornadoes cause a lot of debris to be blown at very high speeds, and you can be hurt by this debris if it hits you. Dangerous flying debris can be blown under highway overpasses and bridges, or weaker overpasses and bridges could be destroyed. You will be safer lying flat in a low-lying area where wind and debris will blow above you. Tornadoes come from severe thunderstorms, which can produce a lot of rain. If you see quickly rising water or flood water coming towards you, move to another spot.
- **Avoid places with wide-span roofs, such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways, or shopping malls.** Wide-span roofs are frequently damaged or destroyed in tornado winds, providing less protection and more risk of injury, than roofs over smaller rooms.

## What to Do After a Tornado

- **Continue listening to local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.** Access may be limited to some parts of the community, or roads may be blocked.
- **Help a neighbor who may require special assistance - infants, elderly people and people with disabilities.** Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance. People who care for them or who have large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- **Help injured or trapped persons.** Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- **Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.** Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- **Avoid disaster areas.** Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of tornadoes.
- **Stay out of damaged buildings.** Tornadoes can cause great damage, creating further hazards. If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe.
- **When entering damaged buildings, use extreme caution.** Moving through debris presents further hazards. Carefully watch every step you take.
- **Wear sturdy shoes.** The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.
- **Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.** Battery-powered lighting is the safest and easiest, preventing fire hazard for the user, occupants, and building.
- **Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.**
- **Look for fire hazards.** There may be broken or leaking gas lines, or damage to electrical systems. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately. **Fire is the most frequent hazard following other disasters.**
- **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- **Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.**
- **Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.**
- *Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.*

**F-0:** 40-72 mph, chimney damage, tree branches broken

**F-1:** 73-112 mph, mobile homes pushed off foundation or overturned

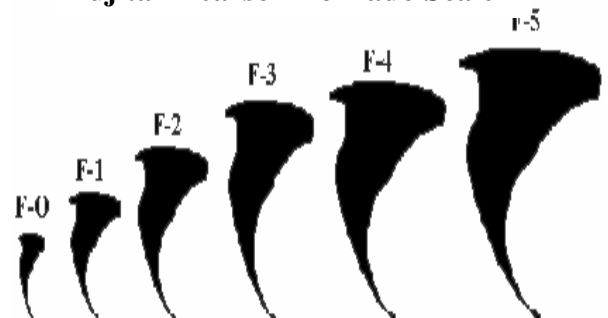
**F-2:** 113-157 mph, considerable damage, mobile homes demolished, trees uprooted

**F-3:** 158-205 mph, roofs and walls torn down, trains overturned, cars thrown

**F-4:** 207-260 mph, well-constructed walls leveled

**F-5:** 261-318 mph, homes lifted off foundation and carried considerable distances, autos thrown as far as 100 meters

### Fujita - Pearson Tornado Scale



The illustrations, instructions and principles contained in the material are general in scope and, to the best of our knowledge, current at the time of publication. No attempt has been made to interpret any referenced codes, standards, or regulations. Please refer to the appropriate code-, standard-, or regulation-making authority for interpretation or clarification.