

# TORNADOES

Tornadoes are violent, rotating storms with winds that can exceed 300 miles per hour. The product of thunderstorms and sometimes hurricanes, they can be highly destructive. Injuries or deaths from tornadoes most often are due to collapsed buildings, flying objects, or people caught trying to outrun the funnel cloud.

## Preparing for a Tornado

- Designate a shelter area in your home. Basements or storm cellars are the safest. Otherwise, use an interior room or hallway on the ground floor.
- Practice getting to your home shelter area.
- If you live in a mobile home, find a sturdy building nearby where you can take shelter. Mobile homes offer little protection in a tornado.
- Contact your local emergency management agency to find out if there are any public safe rooms or shelters nearby.
- Know the locations of designated shelter areas in places like schools and shopping centers.

## Terms to Know

### **Tornado Watch**

Tornadoes are possible in the area. Stay tuned to radio or TV and watch the sky.

### **Tornado Warning**

A tornado has been sighted. Take cover at once.

## During a Tornado Watch

- Stay tuned to radio or TV for updates.
- Be prepared to take shelter at any time, since some tornadoes develop so quickly that advance warning is impossible.
- Watch the sky for funnel-shaped clouds and pay attention to tornado danger signs—dark, greenish sky, large hail and a loud roar similar to a freight train.
- Stay out of large, flat buildings with wide-open areas such as supermarkets or shopping malls.
- Stock your home shelter area with a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, extra batteries, water and a first aid kit.

## During a Tornado Warning

- Head for the designated shelter or a central area on the lowest floor of a nearby building.
- In a high-rise, get to the lowest floor possible and go to an interior room.
- Leave vehicles and mobile homes at once. Seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- If you are caught outside, lie flat in a ditch and cover your head. Do not get under bridges or overpasses.
- Never attempt to outrun a tornado.

## After a Tornado

- Watch out for debris—especially broken glass—and downed electrical lines.
- Be careful when entering a tornado-damaged structure. Make sure the walls and roof are in place and the foundation is sound.

### Did You Know

About 1,000 tornadoes touch down in the United States every year.