

Tornadoes are nature's most violent—and erratic—storms. A tornado can travel for miles along the ground, lift, and suddenly change direction and strike again. There is little you can do to protect your home or workplace from the strength of tornado winds, but there are actions you can take to protect yourself and your family better.

Basic Safety Rules:

Keep alert to changing weather conditions.

Take shelter immediately when you hear a tornado warning or see a funnel cloud.

Know where your shelter is before you need it.

Tornadoes are formed by severe thunderstorms, most frequently in the spring and summer. If you live in a tornado-prone area, stay alert during severe weather.

Know your community's warning signals. Most often warnings will be given by local radio and television stations and by NOAA Weather Radio. In addition, some communities have sirens or whistles to warn of natural disasters.

Watches and Warnings

A TORNADO WATCH is given when weather conditions are favorable to the formation of tornadoes, for example during severe thunderstorms. During a TORNADO WATCH, keep an eye on the weather and be prepared to take shelter immediately if conditions worsen.

A TORNADO WARNING is given when a tornado funnel is sighted or indicated by radar. You should take shelter immediately. Because tornadoes can form and move quickly, there may not be time for a warning. That's why it's important to stay alert during severe storms.

Although there is no guaranteed safe place during a tornado, some locations are better than others. By following these suggested safety tips, you can increase your chances for survival.