

## Tornado Myths:

**MYTH:** *Areas near rivers, lakes, mountains, and even cities are safe from tornadoes.* No place is safe from tornadoes. They can cross rivers, travel up mountains, roar through valleys and hit major metropolitan areas. The great Tri-State tornado of 1925, the deadliest tornado ever recorded, crossed both the Mississippi and Wabash Rivers.


**MYTH:** *Open windows in your house to equalize pressure.* Do not do this! Your house will not "explode" due to a tornado passing over it, and taking time to open windows reduces your ability to seek safe shelter in time. Plus, opening windows allows damaging winds to enter the structure.

**MYTH:** *Get to (or away from) the southwest corner of the building for safety.* The safest place in a building is in a small, reinforced room (bathroom or closet) near the center of the building, on the lowest floor (preferably below ground). Safer yet, of course, is a shelter specifically designed for tornado safety.

**MYTH:** *Mobile homes attract tornadoes.* This myth probably came from the tendency of tornadoes to demolish mobile homes while leaving nearby structures only slightly damaged. Mobile homes can be severely damaged even by weak tornadoes. If the mobile home is not tied down, it is even vulnerable to 50 mph winds.

**MYTH:** *Low pressure with a tornado causes buildings to "explode" as the tornado passes overhead.* Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.

**MYTH:** *If you are caught out in the open, you should seek shelter under highway overpasses.* Seeking shelter under an overpass puts you at greater risk of being killed or seriously injured by flying debris from the powerful tornadic winds. Airborne debris is blown into and channeled under the overpass. Debris of varying sizes and types moving at incredible speeds can easily penetrate clothing and skin causing serious injuries and possibly death. A person could be blown out or carried away from the overpass by the fierce tornado winds. People positioned at the top of the overpass encounter even higher wind speeds and more missile-like debris.

**ENHANCED FUJITA SCALE:**  
Tornadoes are classified according to the intensity of DAMAGE they cause to objects.

<b>EF0</b>	<b>65-85 MPH</b>	<b>LIGHT</b>
<b>EF1</b>	<b>86-109 MPH</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>
<b>EF2</b>	<b>110-137 MPH</b>	<b>CONSIDERABLE</b>
<b>EF3</b>	<b>138-167 MPH</b>	<b>SEVERE</b>
<b>EF4</b>	<b>168-199 MPH</b>	<b>DEVASTATING</b>
<b>EF5</b>	<b>200-234 MPH</b>	<b>INCREDIBLE</b>

Check out the National Weather Service Paducah website for the latest information at [weather.gov/paducah](http://weather.gov/paducah)

Call for the latest forecast from the National Weather Service's Weather Information Now number:

Paducah, KY: 270-744-6331

Evansville, IN: 812-425-5549

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service

8250 Kentucky Highway 3520

West Paducah, KY 42086

270-744-6440

# Severe Weather Safety Guide

## *Tornadoes*



A reference guide from your  
National Weather Service  
Paducah, Kentucky

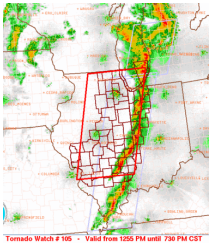




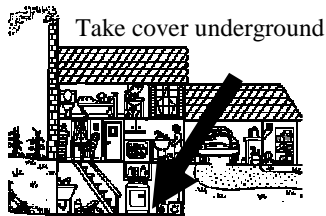
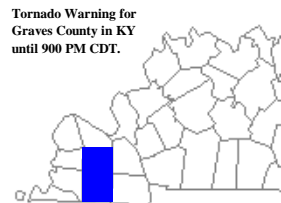
## What is a tornado?

A violently rotating column of air pendant from a thunderstorm and in contact with the ground.

When the National Weather Service issues a **TORNADO WATCH**: This means tornadoes are possible in your area. Watch the sky and listen to your radio or T.V. for updates.



When the National Weather Service issues a **TORNADO WARNING**: This means a tornado has been detected on the Doppler Radar or someone has reported a tornado. Take immediate action—Take cover.



In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and 1500 injuries.

Tornadoes can happen any time of the year and any time of the day. However, in the southern states, peak tornado occurrence is March through May, while peak months in the northern states are during late spring and summer. Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 300pm and 900pm, but can occur at any time of the day.

## Tornado Safety Tips

*Remember it is flying debris from tornadoes that causes the most injuries and fatalities.*

- Go to a basement and get under the stairway or under a heavy piece of furniture. If there is no basement, go to a small interior room on the lowest floor, such as a closet, bathroom or hallway. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- Stay away from windows and glass and cover your head! Cover your body with thick blankets, pillows, mattresses, sleeping bags, couch cushions, etc.
- Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, chimneys etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor and crush you.



- At school, go to your designated location...or to an interior hallway on the lowest floor and cover your head!
- Avoid locations with high ceilings or wide-span roofs, such as gymnasiums, shopping malls, cafeterias, churches and auditoriums.
- Abandon mobile homes and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building or a storm shelter.
- If caught outside or in a vehicle, go to the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building or as a last resort, lie flat in a ditch or depression and cover your head.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car. Leave it immediately for safe shelter.
- Do not take shelter under highway overpasses or bridges.
- In a pinch, put a metal trash can over your body. It will keep some flying debris from injuring you.

## What you can do

### BEFORE the storm:

- One of the most important things you can do to prevent being injured or killed in a tornado is to be alert to the possibility of severe weather. Most deaths and injuries happen to people who are unaware and uninformed.
- Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and when outdoors. Know where your designated shelter is located BEFORE the storm season begins.
- Have frequent drills.
- Know the county in which you live, and keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive warnings. Listen to radio and television for information.
- If planning a trip outdoors, listen to the latest forecasts and take necessary action if threatening weather is possible.
- If you shop frequently at certain stores, learn locations of bathrooms, storage rooms or other interior shelter areas away from windows, and the shortest ways to get there.
- Put together an emergency storm kit including a battery powered radio, extra money, flashlight, batteries, bottled water, essential medicines, extra clothes, canned food, blankets and simple first aid items in a waterproof container.
- Have a pre-determined place to meet after a disaster.