

Severe Weather Procedures

There's a significant threat of dangerous storms this spring. This is the time to think about what you will do to keep you and your family safe!!

Based on recent experiences and lessons learned from other severe weather events, here are some things to think about as you prepare for tornadoes and severe thunderstorms:

Pay Attention!!

One of the most important things you can do is to stay informed about what's expected. Outlooks and forecasts will change several times between now and when the storms happen, so if you want to be informed, you need to check for the latest weather information often.

Don't get too hung up on words like "outbreak", "moderate risk", etc. NWS meteorologists are on duty 24 hours a day and will be providing the most up-to-date and detailed information possible. There's often quite a bit of uncertainty about what's going to happen, so this is not a time to panic, but a time to prepare.

Sirens

Remember that outdoor warning devices (sirens) are not intended to warn people inside buildings or cars. They are designed to alert people who are outside. Don't rely on a warning siren as your main warning source! Also, most communities do not sound an all-clear signal. You should check with your local emergency management office for details on how your community's warning systems work.

Receiving a warning

You need to have more than one way to get a tornado warning! For most people, the main way is television, but what happens when the power goes out, or you lose your cable or satellite signal, or the TV meteorologists are not talking about the storm near you? TV alone is not enough!

A weather radio - with battery backup - can give you warnings for your county and those around you. If you have a weather radio, this is a good time to make sure it's working. Can you hear the broadcast clearly? If you're not getting a clear signal, you may not get the warning alarm. Is the radio programmed correctly for your county? Is the radio in a location where someone will hear it when it sounds an alarm?

Protecting yourself

Your main goal when taking shelter from a tornado is to put as many barriers between you and the flying and falling debris as you can. This is why it's best to get as deep inside a sturdy building as you can, on the lowest floor possible. But even there, it's good to have more padding and protection, and this might include pillows, couch cushions, sleeping bags, comforters, blankets, quilts, coats/jackets and even a mattress (if you can move it to your shelter in time).

Is your shelter ready?

If you have your tornado shelter area picked out - whether it's a closet or bathroom, a safe room or underground shelter - think about what you need to take to your shelter if you need to use it. Wear shoes, and grab your car keys and cell phone. Do you have a pet? You might want to bring a leash or pet carrier. These are the kinds of things you might not think about but that can make a big difference if your home is damaged.

Where is your shelter?

If you live in a mobile home and your tornado safety plan involves you having to travel to a shelter - whether it's down the road or across town - you have to allow yourself plenty of time to get there. You probably can't wait until a tornado warning is issued for your area to travel to shelter. And if you wait until you hear sirens sounding or think you'll be able to see or hear the tornado, you're not going to have enough time to get to a safe place. Being in a car is one of the worst places you can be with a tornado nearby, so leave yourself plenty of time to get to your safe place!

Public Shelters

Although many communities do not have public shelters, Carney does have two FEMA-rated Safe Rooms, located at the south end of the elementary school buildings, and inside the high school building. If you live more than a few blocks from the school campus, though, your best option may be to shelter in place.

Tornado shelter fashion

Does it matter what you wear when you're taking shelter from a tornado? Absolutely!

Picture yourself walking through tornado debris - wood, broken glass, insulation, nails, and other sharp objects - in the dark, in the rain with strong winds blowing. You'll be much better off wearing long pants and a long sleeve shirt along with sturdy shoes versus shorts and flip flops.

Another key piece of tornado survival equipment is a helmet. A bicycle, motorcycle, football, or baseball helmet can help prevent head injuries, which is one of the leading causes of death in a tornado.

Taking shelter: what if you're away from home?

You may have a well-thought-out safety plan at home, work and school, but none of that will help you if you're traveling on the road, at an outdoor event, or in other unfamiliar locations. Your safety is totally your responsibility, and you should not depend on anyone else to tell you where to go and when to go there. You have to think about this in advance.

For example, if you're attending a football game, how will you know a watch or warning has been issued? If you leave the game to drive home, how will you know if you're driving into a dangerous

storm? Now is the time to think ahead and make your plans! Taking a few minutes to do that now can make a huge difference if you need to make those critical decisions later.

Take care of friends and family

If you are reading this page, it probably means you're more interested in weather than some of your family or friends might be. You can help get the word out by letting them know about the chance for severe weather, and by contacting them if severe storms are headed their way. Some of the best warnings come from a family member or friend.