Charlottesville Area Tornado Readiness Project

Are You Ready for a Tornado?

Here's what you can do to prepare for such an emergency

Prepare a Home Tornado Plan

- ✔ Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if there is no basement, a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep this place uncluttered.
- ✔ If you are in a high-rise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit containing—

- ✔ First aid kit and essential medications.
- ✔ Canned food and can opener.
- ✔ At least three gallons of water per person.
- ✔ Protective clothing, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- ✔ Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- ✔ Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- ✔ Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)

Conduct periodic tornado drills so everyone remembers what to do when a tornado is approaching.

Stay tuned for storm warnings

- ✔ Listen to your local radio and TV stations for updated storm information.
- ✔ Know what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means:
  - A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible in your area.
  - A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area. Go to safety immediately.
- ✔ Tornado WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued by county or parish.

When a tornado WATCH is issued—

- ✔ Listen to local radio and TV stations for further updates.
- ✔ Be alert to changing weather conditions. Blowing debris or the sound of an approaching tornado may alert you. Many people say it sounds like a freight train.

When a tornado WARNING is issued—

- ✔ If you are inside, go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects. The tornado may be approaching your area.
- ✔ If you are outside, hurry to the basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- ✔ If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety (as above).

After the tornado passes—

- ✔ Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area.
- ✔ Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- ✔ Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage.
- ✔ Do not use candles at any time.

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UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

Forget the notion that "twisters" only happen in the Midwest. Tornadoes have been reported in every state. And although they generally occur during spring and summer, they can happen any time of the year.

With winds swirling at 200 miles an hour or more, a tornado can destroy just about anything in its path. Generally, there are weather signs and warnings that will alert you to take precautions.

Be prepared by having various family members do each of the items on the checklist below. Then get together to discuss and finalize your Family Disaster Plan.

_____ **Pick a safe place in your home where family members could gather during a tornado. (If you have a basement, make it your safe place. If you do not have a basement, consider an interior hallway or room on the lowest floor.) Make sure there are no windows or glass doors in the area. Keep this place uncluttered.**

Basement: ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, basement is your safe place.
If no (or if you are in a high-rise building), choose another safe place.

Location of safe place: _____

_____ **If you live in a mobile home, choose another safe place in a nearby sturdy building. (If your mobile home park has a designated shelter, make it your safe place.)**

Location of safe place: _____

_____ **Put together a Disaster Supplies Kit in a clearly labeled, easy-to-grab container.**

Location of Disaster Supplies Kit: _____

_____ **Write instructions on how to turn off your home's electricity, water, and gas if advised to do so by local authorities. (A professional must turn gas service back on.)**

Instructions written: _____
(date)

_____ **Make sure all family members know the name of the county or parish where you live or are traveling, because tornado WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued for county or parish.**

Name of county/parish where you live: _____

Name of county/parish where you are traveling: _____

Discuss with your family what you will do when a tornado WATCH or WARNING is issued.

And remember . . . when a tornado, earthquake, flood, hurricane, or other emergency happens in your community, you can count on your local American Red Cross chapter to be there to help you and your family. Your Red Cross is not a government agency and depends on contributions of your time, money, and blood.

For more information, contact your local Red Cross chapter, National Weather Service office, or emergency management agency. You can also visit these Web sites:

American Red Cross: **www.redcross.org**

National Weather Service: **www.nws.noaa.gov**

Federal Emergency Management Agency: **www.fema.gov**

Your local contact is:

www.charlottesville.org www.albemarle.org www.virginia.edu