

## **Tornado Season**

Emergency plans at work should have an up-to-date tornado plan. All employees should know where to go when warned. Just as in any emergency the key words are "be prepared." The same goes for plans at home. According to Herbert White, public safety meteorologist with the National Weather Service, workplaces need to have someone responsible for monitoring severe weather. Offices and plants usually have a large amount of glass on the outside walls. Employees should get into the innermost portions of the lowest floor possible. If there is little time, they should get behind or under furniture away from windows and glass doorways.

Don't wait until it is too late. Provide your employees with information about what to do at work, at home and in the car. The chances of surviving a tornado depend on whether people know what to do before, during and after a storm strikes. It's critical to know when tornado warnings and watches are in effect and what they signify.

*A watch means conditions are right for a tornado.*

*A warning means a tornado has been sighted in the area.*

The following checklist-compiled from American Red Cross and National Weather Service information-will help you and your family prepare for the worst.

### **What to do right now**

1. Designate a shelter area in your home. Use your basement or underground shelter if you have one. Either way, make sure there are no heavy appliances on the floor above your shelter spot.
2. If you don't have a basement, pick a shelter in a hallway or closet inside your house and away from windows. If you live in a mobile home, find a place in a nearby sturdy building.
3. In offices and schools, find out where official shelter areas are. Assemble a disaster-supply kit. [See "Stock a Disaster Supply Kit."] Learn how to shut down electric, gas and waterlines. Keep written instructions for all family members.
4. Know the name of the county you live in; officials give warnings and watches by area.
5. Conduct family tornado drills.
6. Develop a family-disaster plan. Contact your local National Weather Service, Safety Council for Southeast Michigan The American Red Cross Office for guidelines on how to develop such a plan.

### **When the "watch" is on**

1. Keep tuned to a radio or television.
2. Keep an eye on the weather. Tornadoes are often accompanied by a dark-greenish sky, large hail and a loud roaring sound. Tornadoes often occur during the non-rainy part of a storm. That's why there's sometimes a brief lull before they strike.
3. Find all of your family members and alert them to the watch.
4. Do not call the National Weather Service or local emergency offices with questions. However, call them if you see a tornado.

### **When a "warning" takes effect**

1. At home, go to your shelter. If you can't go to the interior of the house on the lowest floor and away from windows. Go under a sturdy desk or table, and wrap yourself in a blanket or heavy coat.
2. In schools, offices or apartment building, go to an official shelter or interior hallway away from windows. In high-rise buildings, go to the lowest part of the building; winds are stronger higher up. Don't seek shelter in large, open rooms where the roof may be more vulnerable to high winds.
3. If you're caught out in the open, find a ditch or other low spot to lie in. Cover your head and neck with your arms.
4. If you're in a mobile home, get out. If you can, find a nearby building with a strong foundation.
5. If you're in a car, get out and seek shelter in a building or in a ditch. Also, don't try to outrun a tornado in your car. Tornadoes can change direction abruptly and move across the ground at 30 mph to 70 mph.