



# Tornado Watch vs. Warning

*Know the Difference and What to Do*

#TornadoStrong



When it comes to tornadoes, the difference between a watch and a warning could mean your life. Follow these tips from the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) and the National Weather Service to become #TornadoStrong.



A **tornado watch** means the weather conditions for tornadoes are favorable during the next few hours. A watch usually covers a large area of several cities, counties, and sometimes even multiple states.

The National Weather Service issues a **tornado warning** when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. A warning means that it is time to take action because there is imminent danger to life and property.

## What should I do if I am under a tornado watch?

- Locate your family members and pets.
- Review your family disaster plan, including where you will take shelter.
- Monitor your NOAA Weather Radio, smartphone apps, and local news for updates.
- Stay aware of changing weather conditions. Even if a tornado does not form, severe thunderstorms can pose a safety risk too.
- Make sure your emergency supplies, such as flashlights, water, and batteries, are accessible.
- Stay away from windows and keep them closed.

## What should I do if I am under a tornado warning?

### IF YOU'RE INSIDE:

Take shelter IMMEDIATELY in an ICC 500 certified tornado shelter or a safe room constructed using FEMA P-320 guidance.

If you do not have a certified shelter or FEMA safe room, immediately go to your safest space, such as a windowless interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building.

- Cover yourself with a mattress, sleeping bag, or another protective blanket. Wear a bike helmet for additional protection.
- If you are not at home or cannot get to your safe room or safe space, protect yourself from flying debris under heavy furniture, such as a sturdy table, and stay clear of windows and doors, including garage doors.
- Monitor your NOAA Weather Radio and alerting apps to get updates.
- DO NOT open or crack the windows in your home.

### IF YOU'RE OUTSIDE:

- If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.
- DO NOT try to outrun a tornado with a vehicle.
- DO NOT get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- If you are in a car or outdoors and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms, cover your body with a coat or blanket, or abandon your car and seek shelter in a low-lying area, such as a ditch or ravine.



### What should I do after a tornado?

- Keep your family together and wait for emergency personnel to arrive.
- Stay away from power lines and puddles as they may hide electrified wires.
- Watch your step to avoid broken glass, nails, and other sharp objects.
- Stay out of any heavily damaged houses or buildings; they could collapse at any time.
- DO NOT use matches or lighters in case of leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby.
- Remain calm and alert. Listen for information and instructions from emergency crews or local officials.

