



City of Takoma Park

Emergency Preparedness

Tornado

BE ALERT TO CHANGING WEATHER CONDITIONS

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to local commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms.
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - ✓ Dark, often greenish sky
 - ✓ Large hail
 - ✓ A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - ✓ Loud roar, similar to a freight train

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

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.

If you are under a tornado WARNING, seek shelter immediately!

TORNADO SAFETY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

With springtime also comes severe weather, such as: thunderstorms, anytime, anywhere, they occur most frequently during the spring and summer months. Tornadoes form from severe thunderstorms and are often accompanied by lightning, strong winds, heavy rain and large hail. Tornadoes produce some of the most violent winds on earth, and can be nearly invisible, recognized only by their swirling debris at the base of the funnel cloud.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE A TORNADO

Be alert to changing local weather conditions. Listen to the local weather report on a radio (e.g. NOAA weather radio, commercial radio) or television newscasts for the latest information. Look for any approaching storms. If you see any of the following danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
- Loud roar, similar to the sound of a freight train

KNOW THE TERMS

- **Tornado Watch:** Indicates that weather conditions are conducive to developing tornadoes in and near the (watch) area. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or if you suspect a tornado is approaching. Remember, acting early helps save lives.
- **Tornado Warning:** Indicates that a tornado has been sighted (by spotters) or indicated by the local weather radar. Tornado warnings indicate imminent danger to life and/or property in the (warning) area. If you are under a tornado warning, seek underground shelter immediately

Tornadoes are rated on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, with categories ranging between EF0 (weakest) and EF5 (strongest).

Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale	Wind Speed
EF0	65-85 mph
EF1	86-110 mph
EF2	111-135 mph
EF3	136-165 mph
EF4	166-200 mph
EF5	200+ mph

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A TORNADO IS APPROACHING?

If you are in:	Then:
A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building, etc.)	The safest place to be during a tornado is in an underground shelter, basement or storm cellar. If there is no underground shelter available, go to a windowless, interior room (e.g. bathroom, closet, or hallway) on the lowest level of a sturdy building. Stay away from corners, windows and doors; try to put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get underneath a sturdy table and use your arms to cover your head and neck. Do not open any windows.
A mobile home or trailer	Mobile homes and trailers, even if tied down, are not safe during tornadoes. Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Do not wait until you see the tornado.
A vehicle (e.g. car or truck)	Buckle your seat belt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter. Never try to outrun a tornado in a car or truck. Do not seek shelter underneath a highway overpass; it is not safe. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. If you can safely get to a lower area than the level of the roadway, exit your car and lie there, covering your

	head with your hands. As a last resort, stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows and protect you head and neck by covering them with your hands.
Outside with no shelter	Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not get under an overpass or bridge; you are safer in a low, flat location. Always watch out for flying debris.

For more preparedness information visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and locally the Montgomery County Emergency Preparedness page