



Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Tornadoes

Tornadoes are incredibly violent local storms that extend to the ground with whirling winds that can exceed 200 mph (322 kph). Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can uproot trees, destroy buildings, and turn harmless objects into deadly missiles in a matter of seconds. It is important to know the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service:

Tornado Watch: Be Prepared! Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives! Watches are issued by the Storm Prediction Center for counties where tornadoes may occur. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or even states.

Tornado Warning: Take Action! A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows. If in a mobile home, a vehicle, or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris. Warnings are issued by your local forecast office.

Your business should have plans for preparing for tornadoes. The following are considerations when developing your plans:

Before the Storm	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor local radio stations or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Channel for a warning alarm tone and add a battery backup to listen for tornado watches and warnings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop plans for communicating with employees before and after a tornado.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish facility shutdown, warning, and evacuation procedures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a plan to secure roof fixtures, access scuttles, and skylights.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Survey the exterior of your facility and make plans to protect outside equipment and structures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish plans for assisting employees who may need transportation in the event of an evacuation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create backup systems, such as alternate power sources (e.g., generators or gasoline-powered pumps), and battery-powered emergency lighting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Install a tornado safe room or shelter that meets Federal Emergency Management or International Codes Council guidelines and standards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult a professional engineer to design the roof to withstand the expected wind loads, provide uplift resistance, and prevent water intrusion.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review local community evacuation plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a records retention and backup program, including options for offsite storage, to ensure vital business records and computer data are not lost during a storm.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Review options to shelter employees in place, including provisions for food, water, and petty cash (for incidentals after the storm).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider training staff who can respond to emergencies (i.e., fire, medical, etc.), when outside resources may not be available.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a resource list of contractors, vendors, and suppliers who may be needed after a storm.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish agreements with contractors to provide repairs as a first priority customer, during an emergency.

During the Storm

<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish a program to ensure monitoring of NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide for a fire watch, in the event that the fixed protection is compromised during the storm.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor equipment processes that must remain on during a storm.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shut down electric equipment during a power interruption to reduce start-up loading.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take shelter in an underground or tornado-safe room or shelter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a tornado-safe room or shelter is not available, take shelter in a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums and other locations that have flat, wide-span roofs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.

After the Storm

<input type="checkbox"/>	Document damage to property, including taking photographs or video.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan to provide temporary securement of the property for damage, such as broken windows.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid areas with downed power lines, especially guide rails and fencing, which can conduct electrically over large distances.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not enter damaged buildings until you are told that they are safe.

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