



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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*Safety Tips:
Prepare for a
Tornado*

Tornadoes and straight-line winds are fast becoming common place in our area. Obviously, we would like to skip these parts of the weather system. Since we don't have control over these events, we best make preparation on how to cope and be ready if they should come our way.

Tornados are arguably one of the most destructive types of storms imaginable. Unlike hurricanes or tropical storms, a tornado can show up with no warning, appearing in minutes and leaving us little time to react. Tornado winds can exceed over 200 miles per hour, so you can imagine the destruction that can result for anything in its path. With this potential weather pattern in mind, it is a critical point that we should take all steps to be prepared for the worst case scenario.

Following we shall list some steps that can help us be prepared, in case we experience an unpleasant event:

Actions Before a Tornado-

- ~Work up a preparedness plan including a warning system for family members, or in the case of a business or experiment station or university building, to alert all people of a method of evacuation with a collection point in a specified "safe" area.
- ~ Develop a phone strategy to alert other parties. A part of this strategy should include a confirmation that your cell phone service will be effective and to know that you will be able to contact other parties for help and/or assistance.
- ~ Periodic drills should be practiced on evacuation and assembling so that if there is an emergency, everyone involved will be familiar with the procedure.
- ~ Review the plans with all employees or family, whichever is the case. The folks with responsibilities assigned need to know what exactly they need to do and where they need to be located, etc.
- ~ The plan should be written up and copies distributed to all family members or employees. The plan, in my opinion, should be reviewed prior to each potential season and updated as needed or required for changes in conditions.

Traits of a Tornado or straight-winds-

- Straight, persistent rotation in the cloud base.
- Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base.
- Hail or heavy rain followed by a dead calm or a fast intense wind shift.
- Tornadoes make a loud sound, like a freight train.
- The peak season is from March through May.
- They usually hit from 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm, but can hit at any time.

Actions during a Tornado-

If a Tornado Warning or threatening weather is approaching:

- ✓ All employees and/or family members must be alerted to move to the center of the building (or wherever the locations is set up) for assembling.
- ✓ Once in the assembling location, the monitor or monitors need to check for all people to be cleared and are in the assembly area. Stay away from windows! Assembly areas should be in the middle of a building at the lowest point.

- ✓ Once you assemble in the appointed area, try to get under tables or sofas turned upside down for protection.

After a Tornado or other weather-related incident-

- ✓ Check the site for safety and security before re-entering. Solicit a 3rd person if necessary.
- ✓ Communication following a disaster is always critical.
- ✓ Establish a communication plan that will work regardless of the nature of the disaster. Assuming that your pre-action plan included secondary telephone numbers for emergency contact, inform the employees of what, when, and how to communicate through these channels.
- ✓ Relay exactly the information that you want dictated to the various media channels to the people involved and specify the media to be informed.
- ✓ The evacuation point or assembly area is the point that the Incident Commander needs to use to relay the information and give further instructions to the other people.

Other Tips for Assistance in a Tornado-

Everyone should know the difference between a **tornado watch** and a **tornado warning**. Some folks have a time distinguishing between the two.

- **A tornado watch** means tornadoes are likely to occur in the watch area. Be ready to react quickly and take shelter and check your emergency supply kits. Stay tuned to radio and TV stations to stay abreast of the weather conditions.
- **A tornado warning** means that there is an imminent threat. A tornado has been sighted in the area or has been indicated by radar. So, take shelter immediately.
- Shelter locations ideally should be in a basement or a storm cellar. We know that neither of these are always available so the next best location is in the middle of a building or house, away from doors and windows. Avoid buildings with flat roofs such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, or auditoriums that normally have flat wide-span roofs.
- **If you are in a vehicle, you have 2 alternatives: Get out and find a low depression below ground level or stay in your car with the seatbelt hooked up and stay down below the level of the windows or door glass. Cover your head with a coat or blanket.**

If care is taken to prepare a plan and keep family and/or employees involved in reviews and updates, you could save injuries and lives, assuming that a tornado or straight-line winds should happen in our area.

*If you don't know what is going to happen –
How are you going to stop it?
Always Plan ahead for Safety's Sake!*

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