



STATE OF DELAWARE
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NEWS RELEASE

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR TORNADOES AND OTHER WEATHER EMERGENCIES

As families in the South and Midwest deal with the destruction and devastation caused by the force of record setting tornadoes and severe storms, Delawareans are encouraged to make time now to prepare for a weather emergency.

“Emergencies can strike quickly and with very little warning. It is imperative that families prepare for emergencies in advance,” said Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) Director Jamie Turner.

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. They can appear suddenly and can be invisible until dust and debris are picked up and propelled away from the funnel or a funnel cloud appears. Planning and practicing specifically how and where you take shelter is a matter of survival. Be prepared to act quickly. Keep in mind that while tornadoes are more common in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest, they can occur in any state and at any time of the year, making advance preparation vitally important.

There are three important steps all families must take to prepare for an emergency.

First, get an emergency kit which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries and store it in your shelter. Also include copies of personal identification, insurance papers, homeowner related paperwork and documentation of your furnishings, preferably electronically stored on a disk or card. Strongly consider downloading a weather warning application to your cell phone and the purchase of a weather radio for your home.

Secondly, make a family emergency plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what actions you will take in the event of an emergency. Identify several locations where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.

It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.

Determine in advance where you will take shelter in case of a tornado warning:

- Cellars or basements provide the best protection.
- If underground shelter is not available, go into a windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- In a high-rise building, go to a small windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners because they attract debris.
- A vehicle, trailer or mobile home does not provide good protection. Plan to go quickly to a building with a strong foundation, if possible.
- If shelter is not available, lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Plan to stay in the shelter location until the danger has passed.

Lastly, familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a tornado hazard.

- A tornado watch means a tornado is possible in your area.
- A tornado warning identifies that it is actually occurring, take shelter immediately.

For additional information visit the DEMA web site at http://dema.delaware.gov/services/disaster_prep.shtml

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