

What are YOU gonna do about...

A TORNADO?

The U.S. has more tornadoes than anywhere else in the world (averaging about 1,200 or so per year), with sightings in all 50 states. Canada is # 2 in volume of tornadoes (averaging about 80 per year) with several high risk areas mostly in central provinces.

Most injuries or deaths caused by tornadoes are from collapsing buildings, flying objects, or trying to outrun a twister in a vehicle. Tornadoes can also produce violent winds, hail, lightning, rain and flooding.

As of 2007, the National Weather Service uses a new scale called the **Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale** that classifies tornadoes based on 28 Damage Indicators to more accurately estimate wind speeds.

| Scale | Wind Estimate | Typical Damage (per NOAA and Wikipedia) |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|
| EF0 | 65-85 mph 105-137 km/h | Light: Peels off some roofs; some damage to gutters or siding; broken branches, etc. |
| EF1 | 86-110 mph 138-177 km/h | Moderate: Strips surface off roofs; mobile homes overturned; broken windows, etc. |
| EF2 | 111-135 mph 178-217 km/h | Considerable: Roofs/mobile homes destroyed; trees snap; light-object missiles generated, etc. |
| EF3 | 136-165 mph 218-266 km/h | Severe: Roofs/walls ripped off sturdy homes; trees debarked; heavy cars lifted & thrown, etc. |
| EF4 | 166-200 mph 267-322 km/h | Devastating: Well-constructed homes leveled; cars thrown; small missiles generated, etc. |
| EF5 | > 200 mph > 322 km/h | Incredible: All homes leveled and swept away; car-sized missiles fly thru air over 100 metres (109 yards); structural damage to high-rises, etc. |

BEFORE A TORNADO:

Prepare - Review FLOOD, LIGHTNING, POWER LOSS and WIND MITIGATION at beginning of this Section.

Learn the buzzwords - Learn the terms / words used with tornado threats...

- **Tornado watch** - a tornado is possible - listen for updates
- **Tornado warning** - a tornado has been sighted so take shelter quickly and keep a radio with you for updates

Learn risks - Ask local emergency management office about threats in your

area, what the warning signals are, and what to do when you hear them.

Where am I? - Make sure your kids know what county or area you live in and listen for that name on radio or TV updates.

Get tuned in - Keep a battery-operated radio (with spare batteries) handy for weather forecasts and updates. (Environment Canada's Weatheradio and NOAA's Weather Radio have tone-alert features that alert you when a Watch or Warning has been issued.)

Be ready to evacuate - If officials say leave - DO it! (*see EVACUATION*)

Make a plan - Review Section 1 to develop a **Family Emergency Plan** and **Disaster Supplies Kit**.

Learn to shut off - Know where and how to shut off electricity, gas and water at main switches and valves -- ask local utilities for instructions.

Where do I go? - Know locations of shelters where you spend time (schools, nursing homes, office, etc.) The best place is underground (like a basement, a safe room, or storm cellar) or find a hallway, bathroom, or closet in middle of building on the lowest floor.

Do drills - Practice going to shelter with your family and "duck and cover" (use your hands and arms to protect head and stay down low).

Put it on film/chip/drive - Either videotape or take pictures of home and personal belongings and store them off-site with your important papers.

DURING A TORNADO WATCH OR WARNING:

Review above tips and...

Listen - Keep up with local news reports tracking the twister or conditions using a battery-operated radio.

Watch & listen - Some danger signs of a tornado include dark green-ish sky, clouds moving to form a funnel, large hail, or loud roar (like a train).

Be ready to evacuate - Keep listening to authorities - if told to leave, DO it (esp. if you live in a mobile home or trailer).

DURING A TORNADO:

Listen - Use a battery-operated radio to hear reports tracking the twister.

Take cover - If you hear or see a tornado coming take cover immediately!

IF IN A TRAILER OR MOBILE HOME – GET OUT!!!

- Get to a stronger shelter... or ...
- Stay low to ground in a ditch and cover head with hands.
- If you hear or see water in the ditch, move quickly to a drier spot (in case lightning strikes nearby).

IF INDOORS - Get to a safe place right away - and avoid windows!!

- In house or small building - Go to basement, storm cellar or middle of building on lowest floor (bathroom, closet or hallway). Get under something sturdy or put mattress or covers over you for protection & stay until danger passes.
- In a school, nursing home, factory or shopping center - Go to designated shelter areas (or interior hallways on lowest floor) -- stay away from open areas.
- In a high-rise building - Go to a small, interior room or hallway on lowest floor possible and avoid windows.

IF OUTDOORS - Try to take shelter in a basement or sturdy building. Or lie in a dry ditch with hands covering your head, but watch and listen for flooding and be aware you're a bigger target for lightning. And if you hear or see water, move since it can carry lightning's electrical charge!

IF IN A VEHICLE - GET OUT and take shelter in a building or lie flat in a ditch with hands covering head (but be aware you're a bigger target for lightning when lying flat & listen for flooding!) DO NOT try to out-drive a tornado! You never know which direction one will go & it moves too fast.

AFTER A TORNADO:

Listen - Use a battery-operated radio to hear reports in case there are more twisters.

Be aware - Watch for broken glass and downed power lines .. and avoid damaged buildings or homes until authorities give the OK to enter.

Injured people - Do not try to move injured people unless they are in danger and call for help immediately. (*see TIPS ON BASIC FIRST AID*)

What to wear - Use sturdy work boots and gloves.

Recovery tips - See TIPS ON RECOVERING FROM A DISASTER