

TORNADOES & WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Although tornadoes occur in many parts of the world, these destructive forces of nature are found most frequently in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains during the spring and summer months. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and over 1,500 injuries. A tornado is defined as "a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground." The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.

Recently 211 tornadoes were reported in six southern states within a few hours' span, including a series of so-called long-track twisters, killing at least 350 people.

Preparation and early response to an imminent tornado saves lives. Tune in local weather and follow expert advisories for tornado warnings. **(Below are some recent archived news articles from the Baltimore Sun regarding tornado activity across Maryland.)**

If you live in a house with a finished basement, corner rooms or bathrooms and closets offer extra protection. The more concrete walls or plumbing around you, the better. This reduces the risk of your home caving in on you and better protects you from flying debris.



If you are in a high-rise building, such as a skyscraper, apartment building or dormitory, go to the lowest level or the most interior part of the building you can find. **Avoid elevators and stay away from windows.**

One of the **worst places to be during a tornado is in a vehicle.** Tornadoes generally track from southwest to northeast or from west to east. Drive in a right angle to the storm and get a considerable distance away.

However, occasionally tornadoes can take an unpredictable turn in any direction. If the storm is approaching fast, park your car quickly and seek a sturdy building or ditch. Do not stay near any vehicles, as they can easily be picked up and dropped by the tornado.

Links to news releases, safety tips, and free information resources.

Multiple news releases regarding recent Maryland tornadoes, Baltimore Sun

<http://weblogs.marylandweather.com/tornadoes/>

The next 3 are very good one-page handouts

Tornado Safety Checklist, American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/checklists/Tornado.pdf>

Power Outages, American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/PowerOutage.pdf>

Flood Checklist, American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/checklists/Flood.pdf>

Local, regional weather, (enter zipcode, stay tuned!)

www.weather.com/

Tornadoes: Nature's Most Violent Storm, NOAA

<http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/edu/safety/tornado.html>

How to Keep Pets Safe During a Tornado, Ehow.com

http://www.ehow.com/how_2311412_keep-pets-safe-during-tornado.html

Tornado Safety, NOAA

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/safety.html>

CDC Tornado Information Resources

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tornadoes/>

U.S. Tornadoes of 2011, Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tornadoes_of_2011

Make a Family Plan, Ready.gov/

<http://www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/>

