



The tips below were provided by Dr. Greg Forbes, severe weather expert at The Weather Channel, and NOAA's Storm Prediction Center.

## Severe Weather Alert

### **1. Figure out a safe place to ride out the storm**

Do you live in a mobile home? Get out. Driving in a car? Get home as quickly as you can, and if that's not possible, get to a sturdy building.

### **2. Get away from windows and get underground**

Regardless of where you're hunkering down, it should be as far away from windows as possible. Even if a tornado doesn't hit, wind or hail could shatter windows, and if you're nearby, you could get hurt.

You should make every attempt to get underground during a severe storm, either in a basement or storm shelter. If neither is possible, head to the innermost room or hallway on the lowest floor of your home. The goal is to put as many walls between yourself and the outside world. The image below, taken following the 2011 EF5 tornado in Joplin, Missouri, shows why this method could save your life. In many of those homes, the outer walls have been destroyed, but a few inner rooms are somewhat intact.

### **3. If a tornado appears while you're on the road ...**

You should make every effort to find a safe building for shelter. If you can't find one, NEVER hide under an overpass. Instead, find a ditch, get down and cover your head. Get as far from your vehicle as you can to prevent it from being blown onto you.

#### **4. Put on your shoes – and a helmet**

If you're at home and severe weather is bearing down, prepare for the worst. If your house is damaged by a tornado, you could end up walking through debris that's riddled with nails, glass shards and splintered wood. The best way to ensure your shoes aren't scattered is to put on a pair before the storm comes.

If you own a bike helmet, be sure to put it on during a severe storm. It could save you from life-threatening head trauma if your home suffers a direct hit.

#### **5. Keep your pets on a leash or in a carrier, and bring them with you**

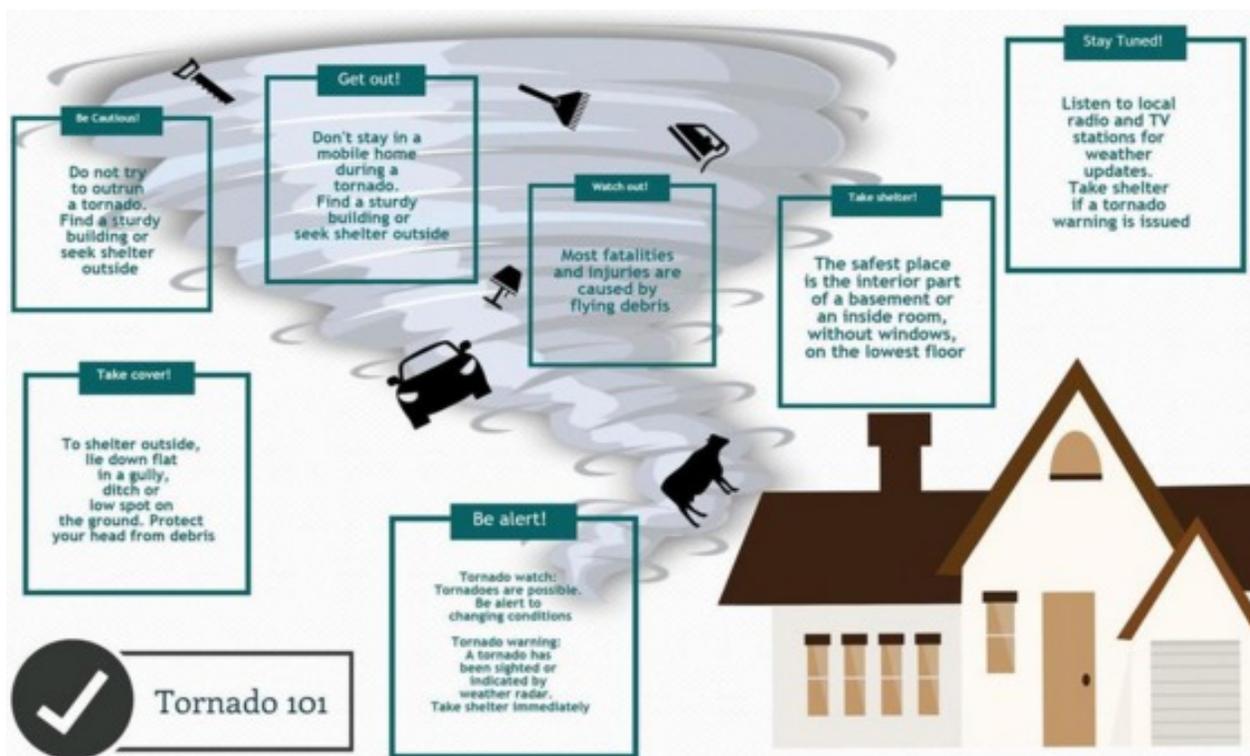
They're a part of the family, so make sure they go to a safe place with you. Make sure their collar is on for identification purposes, and keep them leashed if they're not in a crate. If your home is damaged by a tornado, it might not be familiar to them anymore, and they might get loose. Be sure to get them to a safe place or put them in a crate while performing clean-up.

#### **6. Don't leave your home and try to drive away from a tornado**

If you made it home, stay there. Tornadoes can shift their path, and even if you think you're directly in the line of the storm, being inside shelter is safer than being inside a car. Traffic jams could keep you from getting out of the storm's path, or a small wobble could send the storm in a different direction.

#### **7. Know your severe weather terms**

- **Severe thunderstorm watch:** Conditions are conducive to the development of severe thunderstorms in and around the watch area. These storms produce hail of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter and/or wind gusts of at least 58 mph.
- **Severe thunderstorm warning:** Issued when a severe thunderstorm has been observed by spotters or indicated on radar, and is occurring or imminent in the warning area. These warnings usually last for a period of 30 to 60 minutes.
- **Tornado watch:** Conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms and multiple tornadoes in and around the watch area. People in the affected areas are encouraged to be vigilant in preparation for severe weather.
- **Tornado warning:** Spotters have sighted a tornado or one has been indicated on radar, and is occurring or imminent in the warning area.
- When a tornado warning has been issued, people in the affected area are strongly encouraged to take cover immediately.



## TORRO Wind/Damage Scale

T#	WIND Mph	DAMAGE
0	39-54	Loose litter raised, twigs snapped, crop trails
1	55-72	Minor shed dmg, lawn chairs raised
2	73-92	Mobile homes displaced, big branches busted
3	93-114	Mobile homes overturned, big trees uprooted
4	115-136	Mob. homes destroyed, house rafters exposed
5	137-160	Cars levitated, house walls standing
6	161-186	Heavy vehicles lifted, house roofs/wall off
7	187-212	Frame house demolished, trains overturned
8	213-240	Steel-frame bldgs buckled, cars hurled far
9	241-269	Trains hurled long way, complete de-barking
10	270-299	Steel-reinforced concrete bldgs severely dmgd

**1,200** tornadoes hit the U.S.  
each year.

An estimated 17% of Americans  
live in a tornado-prone zone,  
but they can touch down anywhere.



Make sure you **DUCK** during a tornado!

**D**own – Get down to the lowest level

**U**nder – Get under something

**C**over your head

**K**eep in the shelter until the storm  
has passed



International Association  
of Fire Fighters