

Tornados

Tornadoes are possible throughout the year in North Carolina. For this reason, it is important to always be prepared for severe weather and the possibility of a tornado. While tornadoes are potential during the entire year in North Carolina, they are mostly likely during the spring season (March through May).

Knowing what to do when a tornado occurs could mean the difference between life and death. When a tornado is spotted or a warning is issued, you may have only a few critical moments to make some crucial decisions. Understanding the basics of tornado safety and preparing now could help reduce the chances of injury or death for you and your family.

Know the Difference – Tornado Watches vs Tornado Warnings:

Tornado Watch – Means the potential exist for a tornado to develop. When a tornado watch is issued, you should take the time to make sure you are prepared. Be aware of rapidly changing conditions, and be ready to take immediate action. Monitor local media outlets for up-to-date weather information. Review where you will go should there be a tornado.

Tornado Warning – Means a tornado has been spotted or indicated on radar. During a tornado warning, you should take evasive action. Remain in shelter until the danger has passed and the warning has expired. Monitor local media outlets for up-to-date weather information.

What to do during a Tornado:

At Home:

- Go to an interior room, away from windows.
- Go to the lowest level possible.
- Do not open or close windows.
- Crouch on the floor, and cover your head as much as possible.

At Work/School:

- Go to lowest level possible, and find an interior room or hallway without windows.
- Avoid large open spaces such as gyms and auditoriums.
- Crouch on the floor, and protect your head.
- Look for Severe Weather Shelter Areas (located in select facilities) marked by this sign:

How you can prepare:

Make a Plan –

Whether you are at home or work/school, you should have a plan in place outlining what you will do during a tornado, or any emergency. Identify **shelter areas** in your home and your office. While on campus, look for the green Severe Weather Shelter Area signs. Some areas may include a basement, underneath interior stairs, and interior closets. Remember to choose interior locations on the lowest level possible, away from windows. Avoid large open spaces such as auditoriums, gyms, and other rooms with large, open roof spans.

At home, know where and how to shut your **utilities** off (ie: gas, water and electric shut offs). This may be important to know to prevent damaged and/or leaking /exposed utilities from creating more significant damage.

Know how you and your family will **communicate** after tornado. Remember that phone lines may be down or busy after an emergency. Consider designating a friend or relative outside of your community to call after an emergency to report your location and condition, or to find out information on your family.

Build a Kit –

Have an emergency kit for home and work that contains the essential items you may need following a disaster. Visit www.redcross.org/ for more information on how to build a kit for you and your family. Remember, you may be on your own for several hours or several days.

Get Informed –

Make sure you know how and when you will be alerted to emergencies both on campus and off campus. Get a NOAA Weather Alert Radio. This will alert you to tornado watches and warnings impacting your area. Register for University emergency notification systems, such as text messaging. Also keep a battery powered radio with you at home and work. This will allow you to access up-to-date weather information if the power is lost.

Are you insured? - Make sure you have insurance to cover property damage. For example, if you rent an apartment or a house, you should have renters insurance. Visit <http://www.ncdoi.com/> for more information.