

Tornado Safety

By: The National Weather Service and American Red Cross

The National Weather Service and the American Red Cross, both members of the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, share a common goal of protecting lives through public education. In regards to tornado safety, all agree that the best options are to go to an underground shelter, basement or safe room.

If no underground shelter or safe room is available, the safest alternative is a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building, such as an interior bathroom. Residents of mobile homes should go to the nearest sturdy building or shelter, if a tornado threatens.



NOAA file photo

If caught outdoors, seek immediate protection in a basement, shelter or sturdy building. If you cannot quickly get to a shelter:

- Immediately get into your vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the nearest sturdy shelter.
- If you experience flying debris while driving, pull over and park. You must quickly choose from the following options:
 - Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt buckled. Put your head down below the windows, covering your head with your hands. Use a blanket or jacket, if available.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands

Your decision should be driven by your specific circumstances.

Most importantly, if you find yourself outdoors or in a vehicle when a tornado is approaching and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you have decisions to make and actions to take – quickly. You are at risk from a number of things outside your control, such as the strength and path of the tornado and the flying debris from your surroundings. You are at risk whether you choose to stay in your vehicle or seek shelter in a depression or ditch. Both are considered last-resort options that provide little protection.

The safest place to be during a tornado is an underground shelter, basement or safe room. To view the joint statement from the American Red Cross and National Weather Service, [click here \(http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/severeweather/resources/NWS-ARC%20Revised%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20Tornado%20Safety_062209.pdf\)](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/severeweather/resources/NWS-ARC%20Revised%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20Tornado%20Safety_062209.pdf)