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**Tornado Facts, Safety Tips & Insurance Information**  
**Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week: March 25-31, 2012**  
**Statewide Tornado Drill: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 9:50 a.m.**

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### Tornado Facts

As the severe weather season approaches, take some time during Severe Weather Safety Awareness Week to make a safety plan for your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Planning ahead will lower the chance of injury or death in the event severe weather strikes. Tornadoes develop from severe thunderstorms. They are usually preceded by very heavy rain and/or large hail. A thunderstorm accompanied by hail indicates that the storm has large amounts of energy and may be severe. In general, the larger the hailstones, the more potential there is for damaging winds and/or tornadoes.

The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths have exceeded the width of one mile and 50 miles long.

Tornadoes generally move from southwest to northeast, but have also been recorded traveling in any direction. The forward speed of a tornado varies from 30 mph to 70 mph.

Peak tornado season in Ohio is generally April through July, and they usually occur between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. Last year, though, an EF1 tornado occurred in Fairfield County at 6 in the morning - which proves that tornadoes can happen at any time, during any season.



### Tornado Safety Tips

Whether practicing in a tornado drill or sheltering during a warning, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourages Ohioans to **DUCK!**

**D** - Go **DOWN** to the lowest level

**U** - Get **UNDER** something

**C** - **COVER** your head

**K** - **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed

- Take responsibility for your safety and be prepared before a watch or warning is issued. Meet with household members to develop a disaster plan to respond to tornado watches and warnings. Conduct regular tornado drills. When a tornado watch is issued, review your plan – don't wait for the watch to become a warning. Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Despite Doppler radar, tornadoes can sometimes occur without any warning, allowing very little time to act. It is important to know the basics of tornado safety. Know the difference between tornado watches and tornado warnings.
- Tune in to one of the following for weather information: NOAA Weather Radio, local/cable television (Ohio News Network or the Weather Channel), or local radio station.
- If you are a person with special needs, register your name and address with your local emergency management agency, police and fire departments before any natural or man-made disaster.
- NOAA Weather Radio has available an alerting tool for people who are deaf or have hearing impairments. Some weather radio receivers can be connected to an existing home security system, much the same as a doorbell, smoke detector or other sensor. For additional information, visit: [http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/special\\_need.htm](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/special_need.htm).
- The safest place to be during a tornado is a basement. If the building has no basement or cellar, go to a small room (a bathroom or closet) on the lowest level of the structure, away from windows and as close to the center of the building as possible.
- Be aware of emergency shelter plans in stores, offices and schools. If no specific shelter has been identified, move to the building's lowest level. Try to avoid areas with large glass windows, large rooms and wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways or shopping malls.
- If you're outside or in mobile home, find shelter immediately by going to the lowest level of a nearby sturdy building. Sturdy buildings are the safest structures to be in when tornadoes threaten. Winds from tornadoes can blow large objects, including cars and mobile homes, hundreds of feet away.
- If you cannot quickly get to a shelter, get into your vehicle, buckle your seatbelt and try to drive to the nearest sturdy shelter.
- If you experience flying debris while driving, pull over and park. Choose to either stay in your vehicle, stay buckled up, duck down below the windows and cover your head with your hands, or find a depression or ditch, exit your vehicle and use your arms and hands to protect your head. Never seek shelter under highway overpasses and bridges.