

Emergency Procedures: Tornadoes

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tornadoes can occur any time of the year, but usually occur in the spring and summer. Considered nature's most violent and erratic storms, they are formed by severe thunderstorms, and consist of whirling winds of up to 300 miles per hour. Tornadoes can sweep through an area, causing serious damage and destruction. In addition to injuries and structural damage, electrical shorts, gas leaks, etc., may create fires or other hazards. Everyone must understand the terminology associated with tornado safety.

Tornado watches are issued by the Severe Storms Forecast Center in Norman, Oklahoma, in collaboration with the local National Weather Service office. The local National Weather Service issues tornado warnings.

Tornado Watch: Weather conditions are considered favorable for tornadoes to form in and near the watch area. These conditions are determined by the National Weather Service which transmits the watch information through weather radio, television and radio. When a **tornado watch** has been issued for your area, you should monitor weather radio, local radio or television for additional watches or warnings.

Tornado Warning: A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted by the public or local law enforcement, or Doppler radar has indicated an area of rotation that could develop, or has developed, into a tornado.

Take shelter immediately. Remember that tornadoes can form and move quickly; therefore, there may not be adequate time to issue a warning. If severe thunderstorms occur, be alert to the fact that a thunderstorm could trigger a tornado and **be prepared**.

TORNADO PLAN

PURPOSE:

To provide faculty, staff and students with guidance on the procedures to be followed when notified of a TORNADO WATCH and/or a TORNADO WARNING originating from the National Weather Service.

GOAL:

To minimize personal injury, loss of life and property damage through proactive measures.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Senior administrators (i.e. deans, directors and department heads) will ensure that all employees within their areas of responsibility read and receive direction to comply with this plan.

NOTE: Particular attention must be given to both new and temporary employees (e.g., seasonal workers, per course instructors, etc.) to ensure that they are briefed by the responsible department. At the time of employment, each temporary employee will be instructed to contact the Building Coordinator in each building where they may be located and obtain the locations of the designated shelter areas.

TORNADO PROCEDURES

TORNADO WATCH

When the National Weather Service issues a tornado watch, it will be received on weather alert radios located in key facilities/offices on campus. Upon hearing the announcement of a TORNADO WATCH, each building coordinator will be responsible for notifying all the departments, staff and faculty in their building. The notification will include the following information/instructions:

- University is under a **TORNADO WATCH**
- Time tornado watch expires
- Normal routine will not be interrupted unless a **TORNADO WARNING** is issued
- If the weather radio or outside sirens sound indicating a tornado warning for Story County, proceed immediately to nearest designated tornado shelter in your building.

TORNADO WARNING

When the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning, weather radios and/or the tornado sirens will be activated. All individuals on campus will proceed to the nearest designated tornado shelter area in the building where they are located. Shelter areas depend on your location at the time of the tornado warning.

IF YOU ARE IN A BUILDING, STAY IN THAT BUILDING AND GO TO THE NEAREST DESIGNATED SHELTER AREA. IF YOU ARE OUTSIDE, IMMEDIATELY ENTER THE NEAREST BUILDING AND PROCEED TO THE NEAREST DESIGNATED SHELTER AREA.

A. Faculty members/supervisory personnel will:

1. Direct occupants to proceed in a quick and orderly manner to the nearest designated shelter area in the building.
2. Instruct occupants not to leave the building.
3. Provide assistance to persons with disabilities.
4. Accompany occupants to the nearest designated shelter area in the building.

B. Occupants will:

1. Proceed to the nearest designated shelter area in the building by the quickest route.
2. Move quickly but in an orderly manner so that all may arrive safely.
3. Take a seat in the shelter area (if seats are not available, calmly remain standing).

REMAIN IN THE SHELTER UNTIL THE TORNADO WARNING IS OVER. THERE IS NO "ALL CLEAR" SIGNAL GIVEN; THIS INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED BY LISTENING TO A RADIO OR TV STATION, OR BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (294-4428).

C. Residence hall residents should follow guidelines for the specific residence hall.

D. Persons with a weather alert radio should bring the radio to the shelter and monitor for the expiration or continuation of the warning.

E. If you are **in the open**:

1. Move at right angles to the tornado.
2. Attempt to reach shelter, such as a building with a basement.
3. If there is no time to escape or find shelter, lie flat in a ditch or depression, avoiding areas subject to rapid water accumulation or flooding in heavy rains.

F. Trouble areas/places to avoid:

1. All outside walls, elevators and windows of buildings.
2. Any low-lying area that could flood.
3. Vehicles---do not use for shelter.
4. Building areas with a large roof span.