

Be Aware and Prepare: Tornadoes in Arkansas

Tornadoes are violent and destructive windstorms. Readily identified by their twisting, funnel-shaped clouds, tornadoes can travel for 100 miles or more, touching down frequently. With winds up to 300 mph, tornadoes strike with deadly force. Tornadoes occur most often in the spring and summer months, typically between midday and midnight, but can occur at any time of the year. Tornadoes can materialize in any state, but are more frequent in the Midwest and Southern states like Arkansas.

Tornado outbreaks can and do occur in Arkansas. While technological advances often provide more warning time, tornadoes can behave in unpredictable ways.

So, what can you do to protect yourself and your property? Think ahead. Be aware, stay prepared and know what to do when tornadoes are possible in your area.

Be Aware. Stay Aware.

- Know the differences between a tornado WATCH and a tornado WARNING. A tornado WATCH means meteorological conditions are ripe for tornado development. A tornado WARNING means that a tornado has either been indicated by radar or sighted nearby.
- Use a NOAA weather radio that broadcasts official National Weather Service forecasts, watches, warnings and other hazard information 24/7.

Plan and Prepare.

- Put together an emergency plan. You can find an easy-to-use planning tool at www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.
- Plan for places where your family can meet if evacuation is necessary. Make sure each family member knows how to get there and has a way to get there.
- Assemble an emergency kit. Include water, nonperishable food, first aid supplies and prescription medicines, flashlights, battery powered radio, clothing, blankets, mosquito repellent, personal hygiene supplies, cash, credit cards, emergency contacts and phone numbers.
- Protect valuable documents and financial papers such as birth and marriage certificates, business records, insurance policies, deeds and credit card information in a safe-deposit box. If possible, scan and save on a flash drive that you can keep with you.
- Make an inventory of your property and belongings. Include the purchase price and date of purchase of each item. Video or photograph items and store inventory with your other valuables.
- Identify safe and protected places in and outside of your home where you can shelter. Basements, windowless interior rooms in the lowest part of your home, and hallways are best. Outside, look for low-lying areas. Keep your emergency kit in this safe place.
- If you live in a mobile home, plan to seek shelter in a more substantial structure. Be sure to identify a nearby sturdy shelter to be used when evacuating from your mobile home.



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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

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When WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued:

- Know how to turn off gas and electricity to your home and property.
- Tune in to a local TV or radio station. Local meteorologists will keep you updated on storm conditions and paths.
- Make sure your safe room is ready and your family is ready to move into it. Don't forget companion animals. If you live in a mobile home, go ahead and get to your safe building.
- If you hear a warning siren, or are otherwise notified of a tornado in your area, get to your safe area immediately. Stay there until the sirens go off and stay off.
- Once the tornado has passed, listen to your radio or TV for additional information and instructions.

For more information:
www.aragriculture.org/disaster/

Part of a disaster preparation series from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Community and Economic Development Department of the Cooperative Extension Service.

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