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As the recovery effort continues in states devastated by the recent storms and tornadoes, it is important to review what should be done to prepare for a tornado, how to act during the disaster, and what steps can be done afterwards for both those affected by the storm and those looking to volunteer, donate, or assist their neighbors in need.

[Join in today](#) as we take steps to recover from this recent storm and pledge to prepare for future disasters.



## PREPARING BEFORE FOR A TORNADO

Every state is at some [risk of tornadoes](#) and the damage that they leave behind. Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible. To begin preparing for any disaster, you should [build an emergency kit](#) and make a [family communications plan](#).

When your area is under a Tornado Watch, be alert to changing weather conditions and listening to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information. Ready.gov has Planning Tools for whether you are a [business](#), [school and workplace](#), [Indian country](#), or [anything in between](#).

Through the use of everyday technology, individuals, families, responders and organizations can successfully prepare for, adapt to and recover from disruptions brought on by emergencies and/or disasters. With effective planning, it is possible to [take advantage of technology before, during and after a crisis to communicate](#) with loved ones and manage your financial affairs.

## TAKING COVER DURING A TORNADO

If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately! Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head.

Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.

If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Put on sturdy shoes. Do not open windows.

Continue to monitor your battery-powered radio or television for emergency information.

### RECOVERING AFTER A TORNADO

After the storm has passed, you should still be aware of weather changes and insecure structures. After a disaster strikes, use extreme caution when [returning home](#). You may be anxious to see your property, but do not return to your home before the area is declared to be safe by local officials. Before entering your home, be sure to take the following measures:

- Check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage;
- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports;
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home; and
- If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering

Text, email, and use social media to let everyone know you're okay. Avoid making phone calls to free up the lines for first responders. You can also let your family and friends know you are safe and well after an emergency via <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>. This website is designed to help make communication between family members and friends easier.

If you are a parent or guardian, keep in mind that children affected by disasters can have trouble coping with the effects and aftermath of disasters. Even children who are not directly affected by a disaster can have fears. For tips on talking to children and helping to support them after a disaster, Ready offers a ["Listen, Protect and Connect" coping guide](#).

**Individuals and families impacted by the storms and tornadoes can apply for assistance in one of three ways:**

- Online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov);
- By phone at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); or

- By web enabled mobile device at [m.fema.gov](https://m.fema.gov).