

Tornado Safety

By: The National Weather Service and American Red Cross (2009)

The National Weather Service and 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 safest place to be during a tornado warning is either an underground shelter, a basement or a tornado safe room.



If a basement or shelter is not available, the safest alternative is a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building, such as a closet or bathroom. Residents of mobile homes should seek safe shelter in the nearest sturdy building or tornado safe room, if a tornado or severe wind storm threatens.

If you are caught outdoors and see a tornado, try to seek immediate safety by getting into a basement, shelter or sturdy building. If you cannot quickly get to a shelter, you must decide other options such as:

- Quickly get into a vehicle, buckle the seat belt and try to drive to a nearby sturdy shelter.
- If flying debris occurs while driving, pull over and park. Quickly determine what next to do:
 - Stay in the vehicle with your seatbelt buckled. Try to 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 (like a ditch), exit the vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.

Your decision of what to do during a tornado should be driven by your specific circumstance.

If you find yourself outdoors or in a vehicle when a tornado is approaching, you have decisions to make and actions to take – immediately!

You are at risk from a number of things that you cannot control, such as the strength and path of a tornado, and flying debris. You are at risk of danger, whether you choose to stay in your vehicle or seek shelter in a depression or ditch. Both are considered last-resort options that offer little protection.

Again, the safest place to be during a tornado or severe wind event is in an underground shelter, basement or safe room. To view the joint statement from the Red Cross and NWS, click [here](#).