



## Coping with tornados

Tornados can happen during any time of year day or night. Knowing what to do when you see a tornado, or when you hear a tornado warning can help protect you and your family. During a tornado, people face hazards from extremely high winds and risk being struck by flying and falling objects. After a tornado, the wreckage left behind poses additional injury risks. Although nothing can be done to prevent tornadoes, there are steps you can take for your health and safety.

### Injuries

Injury may result from the direct impact of a tornado, or it may occur after the storm, when people walk among debris and enter damaged buildings. Common causes of injury included falling objects and heavy, rolling objects. Because tornadoes often damage power lines, gas lines, or electrical systems, there is a risk of fire, electrocution, or an explosion. Protecting yourself and your family requires promptly treating any injuries suffered during the storm and using extreme care to avoid further hazards.

### Inspecting the Damage

- After a tornado, be aware of possible structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazards in your home. Contact your local city or county building inspectors for information on structural safety codes and standards. They may also offer suggestions on finding a qualified contractor to do work for you.
- If you suspect any damage to your home, shut off electrical power, natural gas, and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions.
- If it is dark when you are inspecting your home, use a flashlight rather than a candle or torch to avoid the risk of fire or explosion in a damaged home.
- If you see frayed wiring or sparks, or if there is an odor of something burning, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker if you have not done so already.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open all windows, and leave the house immediately. Notify the gas company, the police or fire departments, or State Fire Marshal's office, and do not turn on the lights, light matches, smoke, or do anything that could cause a spark. Do not return to your house until you are told it is safe to do so.

### Safety During Clean Up

- Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves, and gloves.
- Learn proper safety procedures and operating instructions before operating any gas-powered or electric-powered saws or tools.
- Clean up spilled medicines, drugs, flammable liquids, and other potentially hazardous materials.

### Children's Needs

After a tornado, children may be afraid the storm will come back again and they will be injured or left alone. Children may even interpret disasters as punishment for real or imagined misdeeds. Explain that a tornado is a natural event. Children will be less likely to experience prolonged fear or anxiety if they know what to expect after a tornado. Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about your own experiences with severe storms, or read aloud a book about tornadoes.
- Encourage your child to express feelings of fear. Listen carefully and show understanding.
- Offer reassurance. Tell your child that the situation is not permanent, and provide physical reassurance through time spent together and displays of affection.
- Include your child in clean-up activities. It is comforting to children to watch the household begin to return to normal and to have a job to do.

**NOTE:** Symptoms of anxiety may not appear for weeks or even months after a tornado; they can affect people of any age. If anxiety disrupts daily activities for any member of your family, seek professional assistance through your Employee Assistance Program.

### Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at [www.FOH4YOU.com](http://www.FOH4YOU.com). Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.

### Additional tools and resources:

- American Red Cross tornado warning tool for your Smartphone:  
<http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/tornado-app>
- Be informed and know what to do before and after a tornado hits:  
<http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>
- Severe weather 101 – know the basics about tornados:  
<http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes/>



Employee Assistance Program

*We care, just call.*

**1-800-222-0364**

1-888-262-7848 TTY Users

[www.FOH4YOU.com](http://www.FOH4YOU.com)

**EAP**

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