



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

EMERGENCY ACTION GUIDE

Tornado

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Emergency Action Guide

TORNADO

While Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center strives to make our campuses as safe and secure as possible, personal safety ultimately becomes a personal matter. How safe you are depends on your preparation and how much attention you pay to your surroundings.

This Emergency Action Guide (EAG) will assist you by providing basic guidelines and actions for you to use to enhance your own personal safety. Read this plan and become familiar with actions you should take in the event of a **tornado**. This guide may not address every specific situation; however, the guidelines and actions found here may be adapted to fit the particular situation or circumstance you are facing.

The TTUHSC **STAT!Alert Emergency Notification System** is used to notify the TTUHSC Community of emergency situations, weather-related campus delays or closings, and other important information via text, telephone, and e-mail. **Don't be left out - go to the [STAT!Alert](#) portal and update your account to assure you have activated the notifications you wish to receive!**

When there's a **tornado**, you've got to be prepared. It's important to have the resources you need — information, updates, and planning — all linked from a central place. When faced with an emergency, you'll know what to do, where to go, and how to respond.

Read this EAG. Be prepared!

Tornado

Tornadoes are considered to be one of nature's most violent storms. With winds that can reach 300 miles per hour and damage paths in excess of one mile wide, this deadly phenomena can form in a matter of seconds.

Know the Terms

First, you must familiarize yourself with the differences between a tornado watch and tornado warning.

- **Tornado Watch:** This means that tornadoes are possible. You should remain alert for approaching storms, watch the sky, and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radios, commercial radio, or the local news for more information.
- **Tornado Warning:** This means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. You should take shelter immediately.

If a **TORNADO WARNING** has been issued, you should:

If in a sturdy building:

- Go to the basement or lowest floor of the building.
- Stay away from exterior walls, doors, and windows.
- Move to interior hallways and small interior rooms (e.g., bathroom, closet, etc.).
- Get under a piece of furniture if possible (e.g. sturdy table, desk).
- Call 911 if emergency help is needed.

If outside or in your vehicle:

- Leave vehicles or portable structures for more substantial shelter.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle.
- If caught outside or in a vehicle with an approaching tornado, lie flat in a ditch or depression well away from any objects (including your vehicle) that could blow or roll over you causing injury or death.

Remember:

- Tornado safety is primarily based on avoiding windblown debris when tornadoes are near.
- The common thread in tornado safety is putting as many walls as you can between you and the tornado.

- Always move to the lowest floor of the building you can safely get to before the tornado strikes.
- Leave doors unlocked as you leave – others may need to use the space to shelter.

Once the storm has passed, you should:

- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound indoors, open windows and leave the building. Refer to Gas Leak Procedures.
- Monitor your portable or weather radio for instructions or an official "all clear" notice. Radio stations will broadcast what to do, the location of emergency shelters, medical aid stations, and the extent of damage.
- Evacuate damaged buildings. Do not re-enter until declared safe by authorities.
- Call 911 only to report a life threatening emergency.

Special Needs Population Considerations

Individuals with special needs such as visual or hearing impairment or limited mobility (walkers, wheelchairs, scooters) may need assistance sheltering in a tornado situation. Be aware of those individuals within your work areas and assist them, if possible. Make them aware of the situation, and assist them in to an area of safety.

Campus buildings are equipped with Evacuation Chairs which can be used to assist individuals with limited mobility. Training in the use of these chairs can be scheduled through the Department of Safety Services (806-743-2597).

Areas of refuge to which individuals can move to safely await assistance in evacuation have been identified on each floor of the campus buildings. The area of refuge may be a stair landing or other area that protects from fire and smoke. If you are uncertain of the location of areas of refuge on your floor, you may contact the TTUHSC Fire Marshals for assistance in locating those areas (806-743-20597).

Support Links

- [FEMA Tornado Information](#) (READY.gov)
- National Weather Service (NWS): [Thunderstorm and Tornado Safety](#)
- National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL): [Tornado Basics](#)
- [HSC OP: 76.15, Severe Weather Warning and Alert Systems](#)