

Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning. To ensure everyone stays safe if a tornado occurs in the area workers can take precautionary actions, including:

- Review and understand the emergency action plan
- Actively participate in emergency drills
- Know the on-site shelter-in-place location
- Learn the warning signs of a tornado
- Pay attention to news of thunderstorms
- Review response and recovery plans



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While the majority of tornadoes occur in the Great Plains of the central United States, also referred to as “Tornado Alley”, tornadoes can occur and have been reported in all 50 states.

- Depending on the area, peak tornado “season” is spring through summer, but it’s important to remember that tornadoes can occur at any time of year.



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All workers should be familiar with the designated tornado shelter location at the worksite.

- An underground area, like a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection from a tornado. If that’s not available, then seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- Most injuries and fatalities are caused by falling objects and flying debris.
- Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls.
- Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias, or other enormous rooms that have flat, wide-span roofs. These large open rooms are especially dangerous because the roof is usually only supported by the outside walls and the pressure from a tornado will cause them to collapse.
- Avoid taking shelter where heavy objects and machinery are on the floor directly above you. These could fall through the floor if the tornado strikes the building.
- For added protection, get under something sturdy like a work bench. If possible, cover your body and protect your head.
- If there isn’t time to get to a tornado shelter or to a lower level, try to get under a door frame or get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris.

Personnel should be aware of what to do if caught outdoors when a tornado is threatening.

- Seek shelter in a basement or a sturdy building. If one is not within walking distance, try to drive in a vehicle, using a seat belt, to the nearest shelter.



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If driving, do not try to outrun a tornado. If flying debris is encountered while in a vehicle, and you are unable to make it to a safe shelter, there are two options:

- 1) Stay in the vehicle with the seat belt on, keep your head below the windows, and cover your head and neck with your hands or a blanket.
- 2) If there is an area which is noticeably lower than the roadway, like a ditch or a ravine, lie in that area and cover your head with your hands.

Response and recovery work after a tornado presents safety hazards that should be properly identified, evaluated, and controlled to reduce or eliminate risks to workers.

- If structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazards are identified, work with your supervisor to notify the proper local authorities.

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