



Twister! Tornado tips to save your life

Each year tornados kill or injure hundreds of people. Thousands of homes are destroyed and whole buildings disappear with only the basements left.

No one can stop a tornado but we can all get out of its path.

That's why Illinois has a special warning system that lets people know when a tornado could develop or has been sighted. It is important for every Illinois citizen to remember which places are safe—and which are dangerous—when a tornado is in their area.

Winds in a tornado spiral around a wide funnel that is big at the top and small at the bottom. The wind may spin more than 200 miles an hour around the funnel while the tornado moves across the land. They are usually accompanied by hail, severe thunderstorms and wind.

Tornado noise is so loud, like a jet airplane, that it blots out the sound of crashing buildings and falling trees.

Air pressure inside the tornado is very low, as though there were a hole in the air. Outside air spins into the hole, carrying dust, dirt, sticks, pieces of glass and even large objects. Houses may be caved in by the wind and the pieces carried away by the storm.

Most tornados move from the southwest to the northeast. Generally, tornados occur in the spring in the late afternoon on a hot day. But they can happen at any time.

When a tornado threatens, immediate action can save lives. Stay away from

the windows, doors and outside walls. Protect your head.

In homes or other small buildings, go to the basement or a place in the middle of the house, like a closet, bathroom or interior hall, that's on the lowest floor.

Get under something sturdy.

In school, be calm and follow the direction of the teacher. Stay away from auditoriums or gymnasiums with wide, huge roofs that could collapse easily.

In shopping centers or very large buildings look for a predesignated shelter. If there isn't one, a middle hallway on the lowest floor is the next best place to take shelter.

In mobile homes or cars, leave them and find a shelter in a building. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert with your hands shielding your head.

When skies look threatening, listen to radio or TV. The National Weather Service tracks weather systems with radar and can usually give adequate advance warning of severe weather conditions. Many communities also have arranged special warning systems, such as air raid sirens.

The fastest way to receive weather information directly from the National Weather Service is over the Weather Radio network. Local, state and federal agencies have combined efforts to establish a statewide weather radio network that reaches nearly every Illinoisan.

The Weather Radio broadcasts are made on one of three highband FM

frequencies: 162.40, 162.475 or 162.55 megahertz. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These broadcasts normally include weather forecasts and observations. During periods of unusual weather, special statements and safety messages, watches and warnings are also included in the broadcast.

Another feature of the Weather Radio Network is that forecasters can activate certain specially designed receivers, such as "weather cubes," during severe weather. These receivers either sound an alarm or turn on automatically in the listener's home or office. This special feature allows immediate notification of the public when a watch or warning is issued, no matter what time of the day or night.

Tornados can strike Illinois at any time. That's why the Illinois Emergency Services and Disaster Agency and the National Weather Service want everybody to know the important safety precautions that can save lives.

Memorize the list of safe places to take shelter. Look for the designated shelters at shopping centers or other public places, just in case you might need to find one quickly in the future.

Clip this article and post it in your home, so family will be reminded of tornado safety precautions. Your family might even want to conduct a "tornado drill" so everyone knows what to do if a tornado threatens.

*Illinois Emergency Services
and Disaster Relief*