



## **APRIL IS TORNADO AWARENESS MONTH**

Tornadoes occur throughout the year, but most frequently from March to September. Missouri ranks fifth in the number of tornadoes per year. Knowing what to do and where to go is critical.

**Below is information from the Webster Groves Fire Department to help you prepare for a tornado emergency.**

**There are two levels of tornado weather conditions:**

1. A **Tornado Watch** indicates that weather conditions are favorable for tornado formations.
2. A **Tornado Warning** indicates that a tornado has actually been spotted or detected on radar.

**When a Tornado Watch is issued**, listen to local radio and TV stations for further updates. Also, be alert to changing weather conditions. Blowing debris or the sound of an approaching tornado may alert you. Many people say it sounds like a freight train.

**When a tornado warning is issued**, St. Louis County will activate a tornado-warning siren with a steady tone lasting 3 to 5 minutes. People should take shelter and remain there until the danger has passed.

### **Have a Plan at Home, Work, School & When You're Away**

**Before a tornado:**

- Know a safe place at home, work and at school.
- Locate local shelters and be aware of the tornado risk in your area.
- Practice tornado drills at home and school.
- Have a plan for how family members will contact one another during an emergency.
- Establish an out-of-area contact (such as a relative or family friend) who can coordinate family members' locations and information should you become separated. Make sure that children learn the phone numbers and addresses and know the emergency plans
- Prepare a family **Disaster Supply Kit**. Families with children should have each child create their own personal pack.

### **Example of a Disaster Supply Kit:**

- First Aid Kit
- Essential medications
- Canned food and can opener
- At least 3 gallons of water a day per person
- Protective clothing, bedding or sleeping bags
- Battery powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. *(Remember: you will need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)*

## **Steps to Take to Protect You and Yours**

### **If a tornado approaches an area and you are...**

- **In a house or small building:** move to the basement or storm shelter. If these aren't available go to a lower level room (such as a closet, bathroom or interior hallway).
- **In a manufactured (mobile) home:** move to a shelter or other building with a strong foundation. If this isn't possible, lie flat in a ditch or another low lying area at a safe distance from the manufactured home.
- **In a vehicle:** get out of the vehicle and go to a shelter. If no shelter is available, get out of the vehicle and lie flat in a ditch or another low-lying area.
- **Outdoors:** move inside a shelter or other building with a strong foundation. If no shelter is available, lie flat in a ditch or another low-lying area.
- **At school:** children should follow their teachers' direction and the school's tornado emergency plan (e.g. go to inner hallways on the lowest level possible, away from windows).

### **After a tornado strikes:**

- Continue to listen to the news and weather updates.
- Stay away from power lines and broken glass.
- Be aware of the possibility of broken gas lines and chemical spills.
- If you smell gas or chemical fumes, immediately evacuate the area and contact authorities.
- Stay out of damaged buildings and return home only after authorities have issued an "all clear" signal.

## **For more information...**

Check out these Web sites for more safety tips, the latest weather forecast, and other weather awareness information.

### **National Weather Service – Forecasts and Warnings**

<http://www.weather.gov> *Click on your part of your state for local weather information*

### **Lightning Safety**

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>

### **American Red Cross**

<http://www.redcross.org>

### **Flood Safety**

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tadd>

### **FEMA For Kids**

<http://www.fema.gov/kids>

### **StormReady – Community Preparedness**

<http://www.stormready.noaa.gov>