

Mecklenburg County ARES®

Tornado Preparedness

A tornado is a column of violently rotating air, spawned by a thunderstorm, which is connected from a thunderstorm cloud to the ground. It often appears funnel shaped or as a column of debris. Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. They may develop suddenly, and may contain winds that reach over 250 mph. Tornadoes are a threat to human life and responsible for millions of dollars of property damage each year in North Carolina.

NC Tornado season begins in March and lasts through November. There are two peaks; the highest peak is in May with a smaller peak in other September. Between 1950 and 2003 there were 17 reported tornadoes in Mecklenburg County, 16 in Union County, 12 in Cleveland County, 11 in Iredell County, 11 in Catawba County, 10 in Cabarrus County, 9 in Stanley County, 9 in Lincoln County, 7 in Gaston County, and 6 in Rowan County – That's over 100 Tornadoes in this region in about a 50 year period, so they are not a rare event in this region.

<http://archive.digtriad.com/news/article/279909/390/Two-Tornado-Seasons-In-North-Carolina>
http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/images/climate/tornadoes/tornado_count_c.jpg

Prepare a Home Tornado Plan

- Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if you have no basement then a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep this place uncluttered.
- If you are in a high-rise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing

- First aid kit and essential medications such as prescriptions.
- Canned food for 3 days, a can opener, disposable plates and silverware.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, a flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members and Pets.

Stay Tuned for Storm Warnings

- Listen to your local repeaters for NOAA Weather Radio announcements and SKYWARN alerts or to commercial radio and television for the latest weather bulletins. Many of our local news sites have radar that can give you up to the minute conditions in our area.
- Charlotte Regional SKYWARN activation occurs on the 145.230 repeater. The Charlotte Regional SKYWARN website is <http://charlotteskywarn.com/>.

- Important NOAA Weather alerts can be heard on the 146.940 repeater and our local Charlotte NOAA Weather frequency is 162.475.
- Know what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means:
 - A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible in your area.
 - A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area. Seek shelter immediately.
- Tornado WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued by our local National Weather Service. If you have a modern weather radio it can be programmed to alert you of weather advisories just affecting your county.

When a Tornado WATCH Is Issued

- Listen to your local NOAA Weather Radio, the 145.230 repeater or commercial radio and TV stations for updated storm information.
- 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

- If you are inside, go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects. The tornado may be approaching your area.
- If you are outside, hurry to the basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for a safe location.

After the Tornado Passes

- Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged areas.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions such as evacuation routes and shelters.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage. Do not use candles, open flames, Coleman lanterns or oil lamps because of the potential for Propane and Natural Gas leaks.

During a Tornado the greatest danger is from flying debris so taking shelter in a sturdy building or basement is essential to surviving a Tornado.

Not official part of the presentation:

As it happens, most deaths from tornadoes are the result of head injuries, according to a review of literature of the past 50 years of. Doctors in Birmingham Alabama have a low-tech safety precaution you might want to try: Wear a helmet. They're absolutely serious. ""Many types of helmets will work: motorcycle helmets, bicycle helmets, football and baseball helmets, even hard hats used by construction workers”.

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-lifestyle/2013/04/looking-injuries-caused-massive-tornado/5383/>