

Tornado TTX Answer Key – Summer 2016

1. Unlike hurricanes or winter weather, tornadoes provide little to no forewarning, which is why it's critical to stay informed of alerts prior to a tornado warning being issued. You can get this information from local television and radio outlets, plus there are other ways to remain up-to-date about alerts and warnings. For example, both the FEMA and American Red Cross mobile apps provide the user with alerts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) when such alerts are issued based on zip code.

Additionally, NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is provided as a public service and includes transmitters covering all 50 states, U.S. territories and adjacent coastal waters. It should be noted that NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal. Here's more information about buying a receiver:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/nwrrcvr.html#buy>.

2. Avoid all windows if a tornado is nearing your home. If your home has a basement, go in the basement and get under some kind of sturdy protection, or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. If possible, know where heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, etc.) and do not go under them as they may fall down through a weakened or crushed floor.

If a tornado is nearing your home and your home does *not* have a basement, go to the lowest floor, a small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell or into an interior hallway. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down, and cover your head with your hands. Also, a bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection. If in an interior room, try to cover yourself with some thick padding (such as a mattress or blankets) to protect against falling debris.

When a tornado is nearing and you are in a motor vehicle, there are no safe options, just slightly less dangerous ones. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Seek shelter in a sturdy building, or underground if possible. If you are caught by extreme winds or flying debris, park the car as quickly and safely as possible out of the traffic lanes. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushioning if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges, which can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

3. A safe room is a hardened structure specifically designed to protect its occupants from extreme weather events, including tornadoes and hurricanes. The level of protection provided by a safe room is a function of its design parameters, including the design wind speed, wind pressure and wind-borne debris impacts. If you live in an area that is prone to tornadoes, consider installing a safe room in your home. For more information, please visit the FEMA Tornado Safe Room FAQ: <http://www.fema.gov/safe-rooms/frequently-asked-questions-tornado/hurricane-safe-rooms>

The following items should be included in a Go-Kit in your safe room: water (one gallon per person, per day) and/or water purification tablets, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, batteries, a hand-crank/solar powered radio, non-perishable food, medications/prescription glasses, baby food, formula, diapers, cash (in small denominations), wrench (to turn off utilities), hand sanitizer, a mylar blanket, ear plugs, a book and/or deck of cards, and critical documents (insurance, proof of identification, etc.) in Ziploc bags.

4. Communicating via text messaging is a good way to contact one another should phone lines and cellular towers get damaged. Sending the messages, “R-U-OK?” or “I-M-OK,” can be invaluable during and immediately following a disaster. Another option to consider should phone lines become inaccessible is to utilize social media, including but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
5. To help you reunite with your loved ones, two meeting points should be established—one in the immediate neighborhood and one at a friend’s or relative’s home in a neighboring state. Another critical necessity is having an emergency family communications plan. Here’s a plan template:
https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan_2012.pdf
6. This may include having items and services already in place in tornado-prone communities. If a loved one is comforted by a certain item (a blanket, photograph, stuffed animal, etc.), be sure to pack the item when evacuating. If a relative requires regularly scheduled mental health therapy, make sure that his/her mental health provider is aware that the family may evacuate to a neighboring state.
7. Should your vehicle become significantly damaged due to the tornado, try to envision how you would evacuate your home and get transportation to stay with a friend or relative. As with other hazards, establishing two meeting places (in your neighborhood and in a neighboring state) is strongly recommended, as is having an emergency family communications plan. Here’s a plan template:
https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan_2012.pdf