



# DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

Est. 1837

## Tornadoes

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Weather in Central Indiana can be dangerous. Please take time to be informed and make preparations prior to a weather emergency. The following information “Surviving The Storm” is available at [www.wthr.com](http://www.wthr.com), [National Weather Service](http://www.nws.gov) issues severe thunderstorm watches and warnings. Remember that tornadoes are spawned from severe thunderstorms.

**Watch** A Watch indicates the possibility of severe weather in a relatively broad area. For instance, a *tornado watch* means conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. Go about your normal routines, but *watch* for threatening weather.

**Warning** A Warning is issued when severe weather is actually occurring. For instance, a *tornado warning* means a tornado has actually been sighted or has been indicated by radar. The warning usually encompasses a relatively small geographic area. If a *warning* is issued for the area in which you live, take cover immediately!

### Tornadoes aren't the only reason to stay alert

- Strong winds of 55 mph or more can cause significant damage even though no tornado is present.
- “Downbursts” are columns of air that slam to the earth and spread high winds in many directions. Downbursts can be just as damaging as tornadoes; if such conditions are present, take the same precautions as you would for a tornado.
- Lightning claims more lives every year than tornadoes. When lightning is a threat, stay indoors and don't use electrical appliances. If you're caught outside, keep a safe distance from tall objects, and try to stay lower than anything nearby. A safe distance from a tree is twice its height.

### Tornado Information

A tornado is defined as a violent rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 300 miles per hour or more. Damage paths can be in excess of one-mile wide and 50 miles long. Tornadoes may occur with little or no advance warning or siren activation.

Mid-afternoon through early evening is the most likely time for a tornado, but they can strike at any time. They can travel at speeds up to 70 miles per hour. Sometimes an approaching tornado will sound like the roar of a train or airplane.



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### **Before the Storm**

- Locate an accessible basement. Interior room or corridor location in your building. Stay informed through local media sources on days when severe weather is expected. WGRE and local news media will post information as promptly as possible about potential severe weather
- Obtain a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup to receive warnings, and keep a good reliable flashlight in your living/office/work area.

### **During the Storm (possible indicators of a tornado):**

- Dark, often greenish sky.
- Large hail.
- Loud roar, similar to a train.
- Cloud of debris (the tornado may not be visible).
- Wind becomes calm and still.
- Frequent lightning.
- Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a storm.

### **When Taking Shelter**

Seek shelter inside, preferably below ground level. Do not waste time opening windows; tornado-force winds will "open" the windows well before the pressure difference can cause any structural damage. Above all, protect your head and lie flat.

- Proceed to the basement of any building that has a basement or lowest level. Position yourself in the safest portion of the area away from glass. Be prepared to kneel facing a wall and cover your head.
- In high-rise buildings (four stories or more), vacate the top floors and move to the lowest floor. Go to an interior corridor away from glass. Be prepared to kneel facing the wall and cover your head.
- Occupants of wood-frame or brick buildings with wood floors (if time) should leave the building and go directly to a more substantial concrete building, preferably with a basement.
- If you have no basement, go to a first floor. Look for a bathroom, closet or room at the center of the structure. If possible, get under heavy furniture and cover your head with blankets or pillows.
- Avoid auditoriums, gyms and other areas with wide, free-span roofs.
- Do not use elevators.
- Do not go to your car. If you are in your car when a tornado is seen, move away from the approaching tornado at right angles, if possible. If there is not time to move or find suitable shelter, leave your car and lie flat in a ditch or depression. Avoid large trees, metal poles and other electrical conductors.



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### **Warning Signals**

- Although warning sirens are a helpful tools in alerting us of potential danger, everyone is personally responsible for preparation and awareness of potentially severe weather.
- Outdoor sirens will sound for a period in excess of two minutes. The sirens are located on top of Julian Science and Math building, in Robe Ann Park and other locations within Greencastle. When this occurs, tune in to local radio and TV stations to determine the nature of the emergency.
- The "all clear" signal is announced by radio and television stations. The sirens remain silent.
- Again, Tornadoes are often associated with the trailing edge of the storm, be sure that the "all clear" has been given before coming out of shelter.



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