

# Tornado Safety Week is coming up next

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In Farmington when a tornado warning is issued, the Department of Public Safety "calls in a platoon of officers who live farthest out to man the fire barn and remain on standby," Goss said.

Both departments do pre-planning in preparation for a tornado touchdown.

IN HIS official proclamation, Blanchard wrote: "Each year, more than 600 tornadoes strike in the United States, including an average of 17 in Michigan."

"Typically, tornadoes often leave a path of death and destruction. Since 1950, more than 200 persons have been killed by tornadoes in Michigan. Property loss has been estimated to be in the millions of dollars."

"Michigan ranks third in the nation in the number of tornado-related deaths. The state's large urban population leaves it especially vulnerable to the devastating effects of tornadoes."

A tornado is a column of violently rotating winds extending down from a thunderstorm-like cloud and touching the surface of the earth. A funnel cloud is a similar column, but it doesn't touch down.

State Police Emergency Management Division compiled the following tornado facts:

- Tornadoes can occur at any time of the day or night in almost any month. But most occur in April, May, June and July, in the late afternoon and evening hours, usually between 3 and 7 p.m. when the temperature is 70-75 degrees with high relative humidity.
- Tornadoes usually come from the southeast at 20-45 mph. Almost all come from the western horizon, and they have traveled at speeds nearing 70 mph.
- The typical tornado is on the ground less than 10 minutes and travels a distance of five miles. But tornadoes have stayed on the ground for more than three hours and have traveled more than 200 miles.
- The width of a tornado as it touches the ground averages 300-400 yards but may be wider, up to one mile across.
- Tornadoes usually turn counterclockwise, with wind speeds varying from less than 100 mph to nearly 300 mph.
- Tornadoes develop from dark thunderstorm-like clouds. Research indicates many occur toward the end of the cloud.

• Tornadoes developing from storms early in the season tend to be the most severe.

A TORNADO or severe thunderstorm watch is issued by the National Severe Storm Center in Kansas City when conditions exist for severe weather to develop. Watches are two to six hours long. They give you time to plan and prepare by:

- Placing small objects, which could become deadly missiles, inside — away from the wind.
- Making sure the entire family knows what to do if a tornado is sighted. Children should be closely supervised.

A tornado or severe-thunderstorm warning is issued by the National Weather Service when a tornado or severe thunderstorm has been sighted or strongly indicated by radar. Warnings usually last no longer than 30 minutes.

Warnings are designed to give you time to act by seeking shelter immediately or staying near shelter, depending on how severe the weather has been forecast.

WHAT CONSTITUTES shelter?

- Houses — a basement offers the greatest safety. Seek shelter under

sturdy furniture or under the stairs, away from under the kitchen, if possible. In houses without basements, take cover in the center of the house on the lowest floor in a small room, such as a closet or bathroom, or under sturdy furniture. If you have time, open a window.

- Mobile homes — during warnings, go to a prearranged, substantial shelter.

- Driving a car — travel at right angles to the tornado's path. If there isn't time to drive away from it, get out of the car and into a basement, ditch or ravine, away from the car. If outside, lie flat in the nearest depression and use your hands to shield your head.

- At work or at school — follow advance plans to move to interior hallways or small rooms on the lowest floor. Avoid areas with glass and wide, free-span roofs.

- In open country — get into a sturdy building, or on the ground, if possible.

WHAT IF your house is struck by a tornado?

- Do your best to protect yourself, your family and your neighbors from further damage.

- Make certain authorities are notified you are a tornado victim.

- Photograph or otherwise document the damage to your property and injuries to your family members.
- Cooperate with authorized officers and volunteers who will arrive to give aid.
- Do not sign contracts for repair work, removal of rubble or additional insurance without consulting authorities.

What if a touchdown happens nearby? Do not go to the tornado scene. The area must be kept clear and secure for the victims and for emergency workers.

NOAA WEATHER Radio is a service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

It provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information directly from the National Weather Service. Broadcasts are made on three high-band FM frequencies not typically found on household radios.

But many radio manufacturers offer special weather radios that pick up these frequencies and which have an emergency warning alarm. Many radios also offer standard AM/FM frequencies plus the weather band.

## He eyes Naval Academy

Charles Bright of Farmington Hills, a senior at Birmingham Brother Hille High School, was selected one of 10 nominees to compete for a 1988 nomination to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, R-

Birmingham, said Bright will compete with nine other nominees for the one academy vacancy allotted to Michigan's 18th Congressional District.

Broomfield said he selected Bright because he has "shown outstanding qualities."

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