

Knowing the emergencies you could face allows you and your family to plan your response. Identifying responses unique to each emergency makes it easier to act fast when seconds matter.

A tornado is a violent rotating column of air extending between a thundercloud and the ground and can reach speeds of up to 400 kilometres per hour. They usually come from the south or west, but can come from any direction and change direction quickly. Tornadoes do not always have a visible funnel cloud and may appear to be standing still when it is actually moving towards you.

Tornadoes are common in Alberta between May and September, most often occurring in the late afternoon and early evening from mid June to early August.

Warning signs of a potential tornado include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Severe thunderstorms with frequent thunder and lightning.
- ▶ An extremely dark sky, sometimes highlighted by green or yellow clouds.
- ▶ A rumbling sound or a whistling sound.
- ▶ A funnel cloud at the rear base of a thundercloud, often behind a curtain of heavy rain or hail.

Before a tornado

How to prepare

- ▶ Make a plan. Every household should have an emergency plan, which includes important information to help guide you and your loved ones, pets and livestock through an emergency. View our [preparing for emergencies tip sheet](#) for more information about making your household emergency plan.
- ▶ Build an emergency kit. Individuals and families should be prepared to take care of themselves for at least 72 hours. View our [preparing for emergencies tip sheet](#) for more information about building an emergency kit.
- ▶ Stay aware. Download the [Alberta Emergency Alert app](#) to get advisories and public safety alerts – including tornado watches and tornado warnings – directly to your phone.

During a tornado

When weather conditions have the potential to create strong winds or tornadoes, do the following:

- ▶ Stay informed of the situation by listening to updates from authorities, like Environment Canada, on local radio. Follow all directions and instructions from authorities.
- ▶ Have your emergency kit, including your important documents and medications, close by.

If there is a tornado in your area, an alert will be broadcast on local radio and television stations, shared via the **Alberta Emergency Alert app** and sent via wireless alert to cell phones in the area through the Canadian Wireless Public Alert system.

Seeking shelter

When you are alerted to a tornado in your area, seek shelter immediately and remain sheltered until the storm has passed. Assist others around you, such as children, seniors and pets, to seek shelter.

General guidelines

- ▶ Take shelter in a small interior room – such as a bathroom, closet or hallway – in the centre of the building on the lowest floor; a basement or underground shelter is preferred. Otherwise, take shelter under a stairway or sturdy table.
- ▶ Cover your body with a blanket, cushion, sleeping bag or mattress, and protect your head and neck with your arms.
- ▶ Close and secure windows and doors, and stay away from them.
- ▶ Bring your emergency kit, including important documents and medications, with you.
- ▶ Stay informed of the situation by listening to updates from authorities on local radio. Follow all directions and instructions from authorities.

If you are outside

- ▶ If the threat is near and shelter in a sturdy building is available, seek shelter.
- ▶ If the threat is near and shelter in a sturdy building is not available, climb into a low-lying area, like a ditch, and protect your head and neck with your arms. Watch water levels, as flooding can occur.

If you are on a farm

- ▶ Do not try to rescue or shelter livestock unless you feel it is safe to do so.

If you are in an office building, apartment or other multi-storey building

- ▶ Do not use the elevator; use stairs instead.

If you are in a large building like an arena, mall or church

Buildings with wide-span roofs, such as an arena or shopping, mall may collapse if a tornado hits.

- ▶ If possible, seek shelter in another building.
- ▶ If you are in one of these buildings and cannot leave, take cover under a sturdy object such as a table or desk.

If you are in a mobile home or recreational vehicle

Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes or any extreme windstorms. More than half of tornado-related deaths occur in mobile homes.

- ▶ If possible, seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- ▶ If you cannot shelter in a sturdy building, climb into a low-lying area, like a ditch, away from your mobile home and protect your head and neck with your arms. Watch water levels, as flooding can occur.

If you are in a vehicles

The worst place to be during a tornado is in a vehicle.

- ▶ If you spot a tornado in the distance, you may be able to avoid a tornado by moving at right angles from its path. You should seek shelter in the nearest sturdy building.
- ▶ If nearby shelter in a sturdy building is available, exit your vehicle and seek shelter.
- ▶ If you cannot shelter in a sturdy building, exit your vehicle and climb into a low-lying area, like a ditch, and protect your head and neck with your arms. Watch water levels, as flooding can occur.
- ▶ Never try to outrun a nearby tornado.
- ▶ Do not seek shelter under your vehicle.
- ▶ Avoid hiding under bridges or overpasses.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIP SHEET

PREPARING FOR TORNADOES

After a tornado

After a tornado, there could be substantial damage to a community and hazards to be aware of.

General guidelines

- ▶ Check for injuries and seek medical attention or provide first aid.
- ▶ Stay informed of the situation by listening to updates from authorities on local radio. Follow all directions and instructions from authorities.
- ▶ If you were not together during a tornado, find or contact your family.
- ▶ Be aware of debris that could cause injury, and wear personal protective equipment, like hard hats, gloves and sturdy footwear.

If you are trapped

- ▶ Do not panic.
- ▶ Try to attract attention to your location by tapping on a pipe or a wall so rescuers can locate you. If you have one, use an emergency whistle or call for help with a cell phone. Shout as a last resort, as shouting can cause you to inhale dust.

Information contained in this tip sheet has been modified from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency and the Government of Canada.

Contact Leduc County Fire Services

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leduc-county.com/emergency-preparedness