

Mississippi ranks fifth in the nation for the number of killer tornadoes and second in the number of fatalities. The peak season for tornadoes in Mississippi is March, April and May, with a secondary season in the Fall months of November and early December. While tornadoes can occur at any time, the most common is late afternoon and early evening from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tornadoes develop quickly, and the most violent move very fast. To help prepare for tornadoes, review these helpful checklists.

### **1. 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, 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-
- Turn off utilities, if instructed to do so.
- Conduct periodic tornado drills so everyone remembers what to do when a tornado is approaching.

### **2. Stay tuned for storm warnings.**

- Listen to your local radio and TV stations for updated storm information.

### **3. When a tornado WATCH is issued:**

- Listen to local radio and TV stations for further updates.
- Be alert to changing conditions. Blowing debris or the sound of an approaching tornado may alert you. Many people say it sounds like a freight train.

### **4. 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 safety.

### **5. After the tornado passes:**

- Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.

- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage.

### WHEN A TORNADO THREATENS

The prime rule is to get as low as you can and put as many walls between yourself and the tornado as possible. Following are other tips:

- In homes or small buildings, go to the basement or to an interior room, interior halls or to small rooms such as a closet or bathroom, on the lowest level.
- Get under something sturdy, like a heavy table or bed.
- In schools, nursing homes, hospitals, factories and shopping centers, go to a pre-designated area. Interior hallways on the lowest floors are usually best.
- In any structure, avoid rooms with large, free- span roofs, such as auditoriums or gymnasiums.
- Make certain your manufactured home is properly installed and correctly anchored to the ground.
- In manufactured homes as any home without a basement, during a watch seek shelter below ground level in a substantial structure. During a warning, move to an interior room with no windows.

- Plan ahead. Make arrangements to stay with friends or neighbors who have basements. Go there if a tornado watch is issued.
- Encourage your manufactured home community to build a tornado shelter if you live in a tornado-prone area.
- Stay away from windows. Don't bother opening or closing them. It won't protect the structure anyway, and you'll just waste time and put yourself -and possibly others -at greater risk. Use those valuable seconds to find a place of safety.
- Stay away from doors, windows and outside walls.
- Protect your head!
- Never try to outrun a tornado in a car. Do not leave a strong building to get into a car to leave the area because of a tornado warning. You could easily drive into the path of a tornado.
  - If you are caught outside with no shelter, lie flat in the nearest ditch or ravine. Find any protected space where you will be below ground level.