

Tornados are nature's most violent storms. They can appear suddenly, without warning, and can be invisible until dust and debris are picked up, or a funnel cloud appears. Planning and practicing specifically **how** and **where** you take shelter is a matter of survival. Be prepared to act quickly. Keep in mind that while tornados are more common in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest, they can occur in any state and at any time of the year, making advance preparation vitally important.

Step 1: Get a Kit

- Get an [Emergency Supply Kit](#), which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries.
- Store it in your shelter location

You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days. In addition, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- [Water](#), one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- [Food](#), at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- [First aid kit](#)
- Whistle to signal for help
- [Dust mask](#), to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.

- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Step 2: Make a Plan

Prepare Your Family

- Make a [Family Emergency Plan](#). Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.
- Determine in advance where you will take shelter in case of a tornado warning:
 - Storm cellars or basements provide the best protection.
 - If underground shelter is not available, go into an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
 - In a high-rise building, go to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
 - Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners because they attract debris.
 - A vehicle, trailer or mobile home does not provide good protection. Plan to go quickly to a building with a strong foundation, if possible.
 - If shelter is not available, lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
 - Plan to stay in the shelter location until the danger has passed.

Step 3: Be Informed

Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a tornado hazard.

- A **tornado watch** means a tornado is possible in your area.
- A **tornado warning** is when a tornado is actually occurring, take shelter immediately.

Listen to Local Officials

Learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your [state](#) [and local government](#). In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.

Outdoor Warning Sirens

The outdoor warning sirens are sounded when a tornado warning is issued from the National Weather Service or a funnel cloud or tornado is identified by a trained storm spotter. The warning siren runs for a minimum of three minutes. Gray County only uses the sirens as a take cover warning device. There is not an all-clear siren.

Gray County Tornado Shelter Information

In the event of a tornado warning, tornado shelter sites have been identified in each community in Gray county:

Copeland: Copeland United Methodist Church basement, 307 Stanley St.

Montezuma: Bethel Home basement, 300 S. Aztec Street. Please use the north or south side doors for entry, so as not to interfere with the elevator use for the residents. The elevator may be used for handicap accessibility after the residents are moved.

Ensign: Ensign United Methodist Church basement

Cimarron: United Methodist Church basement, 104 N. 2nd St

Ingalls: Ingalls Community Bible Church basement, 212 N. Main St., north door with porch light

St. Stanislaus Catholic Church basement, 200 N. Rush

Kalvesta: Kalvesta United Methodist Church basement

