

# TORNADO PREPAREDNESS FOR BUSINESSES



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SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

# PREPARING FOR A TORNADO

Tornadoes mostly occur during spring and summer. On average, 1,000 tornadoes touch down in the US each year. They are dangerous and unpredictable and can cause significant damage to businesses.

## CREATING A PREPAREDNESS PLAN

**Evaluate your risks.** Understand the risk of tornadoes surrounding the location of your business.

**Create a communications plan.** This would include an emergency notification system. Develop a system for knowing who is in the building in the event of an emergency. Appoint team leaders who will communicate with and direct people in an emergency and decide how the teams will stay in contact and communicate during and after. You should also develop an external list of emergency contacts including:

- Police/ Fire/ Ambulance
- Utility Contacts

**Know the capabilities of your facility.** Know where your utility shut-offs are. Determine your power requirements and test emergency power. If your facility does not have a generator, consider purchasing one.

**Designate a safe room and create evacuation plans.** Determine where your tornado safe rooms are located. These should be on the lowest level of the building and away from glass and/or windows. Be sure to practice your plan at least twice a year.

**Create an emergency kit.** Keep this kit in your designated shelter so you'll have it on hand if you ever need to wait out a tornado or severe storm. These kits tend to include non-perishable food, bottled water, a first-aid kit, basic tools, flashlights, a radio, and batteries.

## PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

**Reduce storm damage.** Keep trees, branches and bushes trimmed. They could fall on personnel, the building, walls, roof, or power lines during severe weather. Every six months, inspect and repair loose or damaged building components such as pipes, gutters, siding, shingles, roof, soffit, fascia, brickwork, and chimneys.

**Secure large furniture and appliances:** Anchor down large pieces of furniture to the wall and/or floor with zip ties or furniture straps.

**Be aware of business continuity.** Plan an off-site backup of critical files and other data if not already using a cloud service. You should also consider what options are available for alternate workspace or production. You can determine if there are short-term outsourcing possibilities for your clients or customers that will make the location operational if a major disaster occurs.





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# EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Having an emergency supply kit can help you and your coworkers tremendously if severe weather strikes your business. The emergency kit should provide for the basic needs of employees. Keep this kit in an easily accessible location. Be sure to maintain the items in your kit and update it as your needs change.

## EMERGENCY SUPPLY ITEMS

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)
- First-aid kit and any essential medications
- Essential company documents
- Emergency contact list
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help if necessary)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Masks, soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Basic tools
  - Wrench
  - Pliers
  - Knife
  - Scissors
  - Duct tape
  - Hammer and nails
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Blankets
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels, and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil





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# STEPS TO TAKE AFTER A TORNADO

Preparedness can help keep you safe if a tornado hits your facility, but it may not be able to protect your property against the strength of these devastating storms. Our expert teams are here to help guide you from crisis to resolution as soon – and as safely – as possible.



## SAFETY FIRST

**If you are trapped, draw attention to yourself.** Send a text, bang on a wall or pipe, or use a whistle to help rescuers find you. Use a cloth or mask to protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from dust.

**Check for injuries.** Take a headcount and ensure that you and everyone in your shelter are okay. If a person is hurt, call 911 immediately.

**Assess the situation.** Continue to monitor local radio or TV stations for updated information. Look for safety hazards such as electrical wire, gas leaks, toxic materials, and any additional hazards that could cause injury.

**Execute a communications plan.** Inform staff members who will be charged with internal/external communication to employees, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders.

### Notify essential contacts including:

- Emergency contacts
- Emergency response contractor
- Insurance carrier/broker and other primary contacts

## ASSESS YOUR FACILITY

**Assess the damage.** The recovery team should begin the task of damage assessment as soon as reasonably possible upon receiving the authorization to return to the facility. Take the time to document the loss, take photos and identify any potential hazards.

**Restore fire protection.** To reoccupy a facility, the fire protection/suppression system must be operable or adequate alternatives must be established.

**Begin preventative maintenance.** Once there is no danger associated with the effects of the loss, begin the process of protecting property and equipment.

**Start the reclamation process.** Begin the cleaning and restoration process as soon as possible. Exposure to water can cause irreparable damage if not addressed in a timely fashion.

**Keep tabs on costs.** It is important to your business and your insurance carrier that people in the organization track the costs associated with the claim process. Make sure you can readily identify and capture expenses directly related to the claim.

**Enact Temporary Repairs.** As an extension of reducing any further damage, temporary repairs should be performed if they will save, protect or preserve property/equipment, and improve personnel safety.

**Complete Final Repairs and Replacement.** Once all parties have agreed on the scope of services required to return to pre-loss condition and funds have been authorized, finalize repairs or if necessary replace “totaled” items.