



# FEMA

## Scenario 2: Tornado Answer Key

1. Unlike hurricanes or winter weather, tornadoes provide little to no forewarning. It is critical to stay informed of alerts prior to a tornado warning being issued. You can get this information from local television and radio outlets, plus there are other ways to remain up-to-date about alerts and warnings. For example, both the FEMA and American Red Cross mobile apps provide the user with alerts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) when such alerts are issued based on zip code. Additionally, NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is provided as a public service and includes transmitters covering all 50 states, U.S. territories and adjacent coastal waters. It should be noted that NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal. Here's more information about buying a receiver: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/nwrrcvr.html#buy>.
2. Avoid all windows if a tornado is nearing your home. If your home has a basement, go in the basement and get under sturdy protection, or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. If possible, know where heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, etc.) and do not go under them as they may fall through a weakened or crushed floor.
  - a. If a tornado is approaching and your home does **not** have a basement, go to the lowest floor, a small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell, or into an interior hallway. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down, and cover your head with your hands. Also, a bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection. If in an interior room, try to cover yourself with some thick padding (such as a mattress or blankets) to protect against falling debris.
  - b. When a tornado is nearing and you are in a vehicle, there are no safe options - just slightly less dangerous ones. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Seek shelter in a sturdy building, or underground if possible. If you are caught by extreme winds or flying debris, park the car as quickly and safely as possible out of the traffic lanes. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushioning if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges because it can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection from flying debris and other materials.
3. A safe room is a hardened structure specifically designed to protect its occupants from extreme weather events, including tornadoes and hurricanes. The level of protection provided by a safe room is a function of its design parameters, including the design wind speed, wind pressure and wind-borne debris impacts. If you live in an area that is prone to tornadoes, consider installing a safe room in your home. For more information, please visit the FEMA Tornado Safe Room FAQ: <http://www.fema.gov/safe-rooms/frequently-asked-questions-tornado/hurricane-safe-rooms>
  - a. The following items should be included in a Go-Kit in your safe room: water (one gallon per person, per day) and/or water purification tablets, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, batteries, a hand-crank/solar powered radio, non-perishable food, medications/prescription glasses, baby food, formula, diapers, cash (in small denominations), wrench (to turn off utilities), hand sanitizer, a mylar



# FEMA

## Scenario 2: Tornado Answer Key

blanket, ear plugs, a book and/or deck of cards, and critical documents (insurance, proof of identification, etc.) in Ziploc bags.

4. Communicating via text messaging is a good way to contact one another should phone lines and cellular towers get damaged. Sending the messages, “R-U-OK?” or “I-M-OK,” can be invaluable during and immediately following a disaster. Another option to consider is utilizing social media to get in contact with family and friends. This includes Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram.
5. To help you reunite with your loved ones, two meeting points should be established—one in the immediate neighborhood and one at a friend’s or relative’s home in a neighboring state. Another critical necessity is having an emergency family communications plan. Here is a plan template:  
[https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan\\_2012.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan_2012.pdf)
6. It is a good plan to have items and services already in place in tornado-prone communities. If a loved one is comforted by a certain item (a blanket, photograph, stuffed animal, etc.), be sure to pack the item when evacuating. If a relative requires regularly scheduled mental health therapy, make sure that his/her mental health provider is aware that the family may evacuate to a neighboring state.
7. Should your vehicle become significantly damaged due to the tornado, try to envision how you would evacuate your home and get transportation to stay with a friend or relative.
8. After a tornado, it is important to be up-to-date regarding any other Warnings and proper safety procedures. Some tips include:
  - Continue listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
  - If you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing in dust or other dangerous particulate matter. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting for help.
  - STAY CLEAR of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.
  - Do NOT enter damaged buildings unless they have been cleared for safety.
  - Save your phone calls for emergencies. Phone lines are often down or jammed after a disaster – use text messaging or social media to communicate with your loved ones.
  - Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves when handling detritus.