

# Tornado Truths

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Tornadoes have caused severe and irreparable damage to tens of thousands of Americans and their property in recent years. On top of the physical and emotional fallout, many have also lost their lives as a direct result of a tornado.

Although you can never control the weather or the outcome of a destructive storm, there are steps you can take to help you and your family remain protected in the event of a tornado. Those steps of action begin with knowing fact from myth.



## **Here are a few tornado truths that could help keep you and those you love safe:**

- When **indoors**, shut all windows and doors. Do not leave them open in an attempt to follow the mythical need to “pressurize” your home because the result would more likely be debris flying through the window and causing severe harm, or wind pressure working to lift the roof off the house from the inside.
- If you are **inside your home or other structure**, retreat to the lowest level (a basement is ideal) or the room closest to the middle of the home or farthest from windows and doors. Do not seek a “corner” of the structure for your retreat; instead, go to the center-most point, away from windows and anything heavy that could fall on your head.
- If you’re **outdoors**, find the lowest spot, such as a ditch or dry river bed, and lie flat on your stomach, covering the back of your head with your hands. Do not follow the myth of seeking shelter underneath a bridge or overpass because it could collapse on top of you or large debris and winds could come rushing underneath and potentially sweep you up into the tornado itself.
- If you are **in a vehicle**, abandon the vehicle and try to find shelter in a structure or outdoors in a low place where you should lay stomach-down and cover the back of your head with your hands. Most importantly, do not attempt to drive away from the storm unless it’s very obviously far away and moving in the opposite direction.
- Do not take shelter near a road or foothill and expect the tornado to miss you. Some myths say that tornadoes will reverse their directions when nearing a road or foothill, but a tornado doesn’t discriminate and *will* keep on its path.
- Keep head gear handy. Head protection can be the number-one most important factor in remaining protected from flying debris—indoors or outdoors—so know where bike, football, batting, boxing and other helmets are in the house, and make them easily accessible.

**For more tornado safety tips**, visit the Storm Prediction Center’s comprehensive guide at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/safety.html>

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