



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

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Safety Tips: Protection
from Tornadoes



It seems that tornadoes are finding their way in our great state of Mississippi much too often. Tornadoes, thunderstorms, straight-line winds and lightning are all occurring in our area, causing major destruction to lives and properties.

We can't control any of these natural disasters, but we can plan, prepare, and take precautions to be able to protect and mitigate some of the circumstances caused by these unruly weather events.

Tornadoes are dangerous severe storms with swirling winds that can exceed over 300 miles per hour and are often accompanied by hail, thunderstorms and oftentimes dangerous lightning. Flying debris can become missiles that can injure and kill. Tornadoes generally move from the southeast to the northeast, generally occurring in the spring. As one can tell spring isn't the only time they occur due to the recent tornadoes in parts of our Mississippi.

TORNADO FACTS-

- 1,000 per/year touch down each year in the USA.
- 3 out of 4 tornadoes in the world occur in the USA.
- Cause an average of 70 fatalities and 1,500 injuries each year in the USA.

TIPS TO CONSIDER FOR TORNADO RECOGNITION-

- Some are clearly visible, others obscured by rain and low hanging clouds that cover them up.
- They can advance so fast that we don't have time to prepare.
- They normally occur at the end of a thunderstorm, where the wind will lie down and the air becoming deathly still.
- Sometimes the funnel-cloud isn't visible, but you can see a trail of dust and/or debris following it.
- They can accompany tropical storms and hurricanes as they approach land.
- The peak season in the South is from March through May and in the North from late spring through early summer and most frequently reported in areas east of the Rocky Mountains.

TIPS FOR PREPARATION-

- ✓ **Be alert for changing weather conditions-** listen to a NOAA weather radio, local radio and TV for the most current information.
- ✓ The following forecasts will keep you abreast of changing conditions and their definitions:
 - ~Tornado Watch – Weather conditions are right for violent weather to form, such as tornadoes or severe thunderstorms.
 - ~Tornado Warning – Actual tornadoes (funnel-shaped clouds) have been detected by radar or nearby sightings. When a warning has been issued, seek cover immediately and remain there until the storm has passed.
- ✓ **Take shelter in a safe place** – Storm shelters are the ideal place to be, but unfortunately we all don't have them. In your home, get in the middle of the house away from doors and windows or go to the bathroom and get in the tub. If possible wrap your body with blankets or household fabrics, and if possible, grab a mattress and place it over your head.

Refrain from taking shelter in a manufactured home; a tornado will move it like a cardboard box.

- ✓ **No time to reach a shelter-** Get in a low depression, like a ditch, slough or culvert. Cover your head with your hands. Refrain from taking cover in elevated structures.
- ✓ **In your car-** Don't try to outrun it; park it and get to a low depression away from trees and structures.

Prior planning for preparedness should include the following:

- Develop a family response plan; orient your family with it and practice it several times each year.
- Prepare an emergency preparedness packet for the home, allowing a 3-day supply of its contents.
- Prepare a list of contacts with all the pertinent emergency phone numbers for contacts after an incident; copy all members of the family and put a copy in the emergency preparedness packet.

TIPS FOR POST-TORNADO ACTIONS-

The absolutely primary action is to check yourself and your family for their health and safety. Assuming they are in satisfactory condition then you proceed with the following considerations:

- Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move the seriously injured folks, unless they are in "harm's way." (if they aren't moved)
- For an unconscious person, stabilize their neck and head; and call for emergency medical help immediately.
- If the victim is not breathing, position their body for CPR; clear their airway and proceed with CPR.
- Maintain their body temperature with blankets or whatever available covering that you can get to.
- Do not attempt to give liquids to unconscious victims.

Personal Health Tips-

- Beware of exhaustion- pace yourself to avoid over tiring.
- Drink plenty of water- wear work boots and gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after working in storm debris.

Safety Issues-

- Beware of washed out roads, damaged power lines, contaminated buildings and/or water, gas leaks, broken glass, etc.
- Inform local officials of any of the above post-tornado structural issues or health issues.

Tips to consider upon Returning to the Home-

- Do not return or enter your home until it is declared safe by the authorities.
- Have a battery light and radio to guide you through darkened areas.
- Beware of encountering snakes or wild animals.
- At the home, walk around the house checking for gas leaks, structural damage, fallen power lines, broken glass, etc. If you have any doubt about the status of these items, call for professional help.
- If you do enter the home, beware of the same items mentioned above to insure your safety.
- Contact your insurer- take pictures of all damaged areas and contents.

**RESPECT THE WEATHER
PREPARE & PREVENT SO
THERE'S NO REPENTING & REPAIRING**