

Portage Prepares

Helping Portage County Citizens prepare for emergencies and disasters.



Tornadoes

As the severe weather season approaches, take some time during Severe Weather Safety Awareness Week to make a safety plan for your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Planning ahead will lower the chance of injury or death in the event severe weather strikes.

Tornadoes develop from severe thunderstorms. They are usually preceded by very heavy rain and/or large hail. A thunderstorm accompanied by hail indicates that the storm has large amounts of energy and may be severe. In general, the larger the hailstones, the more potential there is for damaging winds and/or tornadoes.

The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths have exceeded the width of one mile and 50 miles long. Tornadoes generally move from southwest to northeast, but have also been recorded traveling in any direction. The forward speed of a tornado varies from 30 mph to 70 mph.

Peak tornado season in Ohio is generally April through July, and they usually occur between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. Last year, though, an EF1 tornado occurred in Fairfield County at 6 in the morning - which proves that tornadoes can happen at any time, during any season.

Office of Homeland Security &
Emergency Management

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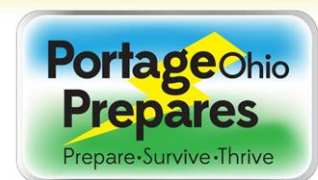
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Tornado Tips

The National Weather Service and Emergency Management share a common goal of protecting lives through public education.

If you cannot quickly get to a shelter:

- Immediately get into your vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the nearest sturdy shelter.
- If you experience flying debris while driving, pull over and park. You must quickly choose from the following options:

*Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt buckled. Put your head down below the windows, covering your head with your hands. Use a blanket or jacket, if available.

*If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.

In regards to tornado safety, all agree that the best options are to go to an underground shelter, basement or safe room. If no underground shelter or safe room is available, the safest alternative is a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building, such as an interior bathroom.

Residents of mobile homes should go to the nearest sturdy building or shelter, if a tornado threatens. If caught outdoors, seek immediate protection in a basement, shelter or sturdy building.

Your decision should be driven by your specific circumstances.

Most importantly, if you find yourself outdoors or in a vehicle when a tornado is approaching and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you have decisions to make and actions to take – quickly. You are at risk from a number of things outside your control, such as the strength and path of the tornado and the flying debris from your surroundings. You are at risk whether you choose to stay in your vehicle or seek shelter in a depression or ditch. Both are considered last-resort options that provide little protection.

The safest place to be during a tornado is an underground shelter, basement or safe room.



More Preparedness Tips

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After a Tornado

Injury may result from the direct impact of a tornado or it may occur afterward when people walk among debris and enter damaged buildings. A study of injuries after a tornado in Marion, Illinois, showed that 50 percent of the tornado-related injuries were suffered during rescue attempts, cleanup and other post-tornado activities. Nearly a third of the injuries resulted from stepping on nails.

Because tornadoes often damage power lines, gas lines or electrical systems, there is a risk of fire, electrocution or an explosion. Protecting yourself and your family requires promptly treating any injuries suffered during the storm and using extreme care to avoid further hazards.

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Get medical assistance immediately. If someone has stopped breathing, begin CPR if you are trained to do so. Stop a bleeding injury by applying direct pressure to the wound. Have any puncture wound evaluated by a physician. If you are trapped, try to attract attention to your location