

Tornadoes

Tornadoes strike any time of the year and every state or any time of the day. While some rare tornadoes have winds in excess of 300 mile per hours, most tornadoes are F0, F1, or F2 tornadoes with winds from 40 to 157 miles per hour.

In Wichita Falls, the peak tornado season is from April through June. There is another smaller rise in the possibility of tornadoes in September. Tornadoes occur at any time in the day or night with the most common time being from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Since 1950 there have been 49 tornadoes recorded in Wichita County. Forty-four of these were F0, F1 or F2 tornadoes while only one was a F4 (1979) and one a F5 (1964) and three were F3 tornado (1954, 1958, and 1962).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issues tornado watches and warnings year round. The best way to insure that you are informed on weather watches and warnings is to purchase a NOAA Weather Radio. Watches and warnings are heard on local televisions and radio as well as NOAA Weather Radio. The definition of a tornado watch and warning are:

Tornado Watch: Tornadoes are possible in your area; remain alert for approaching storms.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted by tornado spotter groups or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, move to your designated place of safety.

If at home:

1. If you have a tornado safe room or storm shelter, go there at once.
2. Go at once to a windowless, interior room, storm cellar, basement, or lowest level of the building.
3. Get away from the windows.
4. Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench, heavy table, or desk and hold on to it.
5. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

If At Work Or School:

1. Go to the areas designated in your tornado plan.
2. Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways or shopping malls.
3. Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold to it.

If Outside:

1. If possible, get inside a building.
2. If shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building.
3. Be aware of potential for flooding