

Tornado Preparedness Plan for Schools



Tornado Preparedness:

- **Education and Training:**
 - Provide tornado safety training to all staff members.
 - Conduct regular tornado drills at least twice per year to ensure everyone knows the proper procedures.
 - [T.C.A. § 68-102-137](#) requires three (3) additional safety drills per year.
 - Develop and confirm protocols to facilitate decision making regarding temporary classrooms, special needs students, assembly areas, outdoor activities, etc.
- **Emergency Supplies:**
 - Maintain emergency go kits in each classroom and throughout the school.
 - Click [here](#) to find examples of what to include in your emergency go kits.
- **Communication Plan:**
 - Keep a weather alert radio in the main office and constantly monitor conditions for current information.
 - Additional information sources include, but are not limited to: The [National Weather Service](#), [The Weather Channel](#), Internet and local TV/radio news stations.
 - Establish a *clear* communication plan to notify staff, students, and parents about tornado warnings and procedures.
 - Designate specific individuals responsible for communicating with emergency services, monitoring weather forecasts, and updating stakeholders during a tornado event.
 - In the event that severe weather approach at release time, implement your delayed release plan/protocol and communicate this information to staff, students and parents.
- **Tornado Watch:**
 - *Tornadoes are possible in the area. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued.*
 - Notify staff and students when a tornado watch is issued.
 - Review tornado procedures and ensure all emergency supplies are readily available.
- **Tornado Warning:**
 - *A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.*
 - Immediately initiate tornado functional procedures when a tornado warning is issued for the school's area.
 - Direct students and staff to move to designated tornado shelter areas.
 - Account for all individuals and take attendance.
 - **TORNADO DANGER SIGNS:**
 - Dark, greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - Low-lying cloud that may be rotating
 - Loud roar, like a freight train
 - Sudden drop in barometric pressure

- Strong winds > 60 mph
- Frequent, intense lightning

Tornado Shelter Areas:

- Identify designated tornado shelter areas in the school building, such as interior hallways, basements, or reinforced rooms without windows.
 - Stay away from glass or other safety hazards.
- Ensure shelter areas are clearly marked with signage.

Regularly inspect and maintain shelter areas to ensure safety and accessibility.

Best Shelter Areas

- Basements or interior lower levels
- Areas with a short roof span
- Away from glass or other safety hazards

Hallways:

- Use interior hallways at a 90-degree angle to through hallways that exit to the outside to help reduce wind tunnel effects.
- Harden hallway shelter areas as needed to reduce exposure to flying debris and other hazards.

Do Not Use:

- Areas with large roof spans such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, etc.
- Temporary or portable classrooms.
- Hallways that have glass doors at each end that open to the outdoors.

Post-Tornado Procedures:

- Monitor local news and weather broadcasts for updated information.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of the school building and grounds for damage.
- Provide medical assistance to anyone injured during the tornado.
- Communicate with emergency services and follow their instructions.
- Coordinate with district officials and parents to reunite students with their families.
- Support students and staff emotionally and provide counseling services if needed.

Additional Resources:

[Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Tornado Preparedness](#)

[Ready.gov Be Prepared for a Tornado](#)

[National Weather Service Tornado Safety](#)

[National Weather Service Local Forecast](#)

[National Weather Service Severe Weather Preparedness Guide for Schools](#)