



U.S. Small Business
Administration

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS

A tornado is arguably one of the most destructive types of storms imaginable. Unlike a hurricane or tropical storm, a tornado may develop almost without warning, appearing within minutes and leaving little time to react accordingly. Winds can get up to and exceed 200mph causing enormous damage in its path. Therefore, the importance of being prepared beforehand cannot be conveyed strongly enough.

The following is a checklist to prepare your business in the event of such an occurrence.

✓ Before the Tornado

- Have a weather alert radio in the office.
- Have a plan to provide emergency notification (warning system) to all employees, clients, visitors and customers in an emergency.
- Put your crisis management plan in writing and give it to all employees.
- Conduct drills regularly to prepare employees for the real thing
- When you establish your timeline for workplace preparation and closure, consider that employees will need to prepare their families and take care of personal matters as well. Allow enough time for them to execute their personal preparedness plans.
- Identify critical employees, and make sure they understand what is expected of them during a disaster. For example, you may need certain employees responsible for IT functions to work during a disaster to protect and reestablish your technology systems. If you need those employees to work remotely, make travel, hotel, and meal arrangements in advance, and ensure they know what equipment and support they will need to perform their duties.
- Develop a plan to allow your payroll, benefits, and HR functions to operate during a disaster, after a disaster, or during any period in which access to your workplace is restricted.
- If employees will be required to return to the workplace to assist in the recovery process before all services are restored, obtain an adequate supply of water, nonperishable food, first-aid supplies, generators, cleaning supplies, batteries, flashlights, and other necessities.
- Update your employee contact information regularly and at the beginning of any season during which natural disasters are more likely.
- Look for the following danger signs: dark, often greenish sky, large hail, dark, low-lying clouds, and/or loud roar (similar to a freight train).



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✓ During the Tornado

- Move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor. If possible, get under a heavy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Mobile homes/ work trailers, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes and should be abandoned.
- Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.

✓ After a Tornado

- Ensure the site is safe for re-entry. A third-party inspector may be necessary to achieve proper safety protocol.
- Communication following a disaster is critical. In advance, establish a communication plan that will work regardless of the nature of the disaster. For example, consider setting up a toll-free number or website, make sure they are operated out of areas that aren't disaster-prone and are located away from your workplace, and give employees instructions on when, how, and what to communicate through those methods following a disaster.

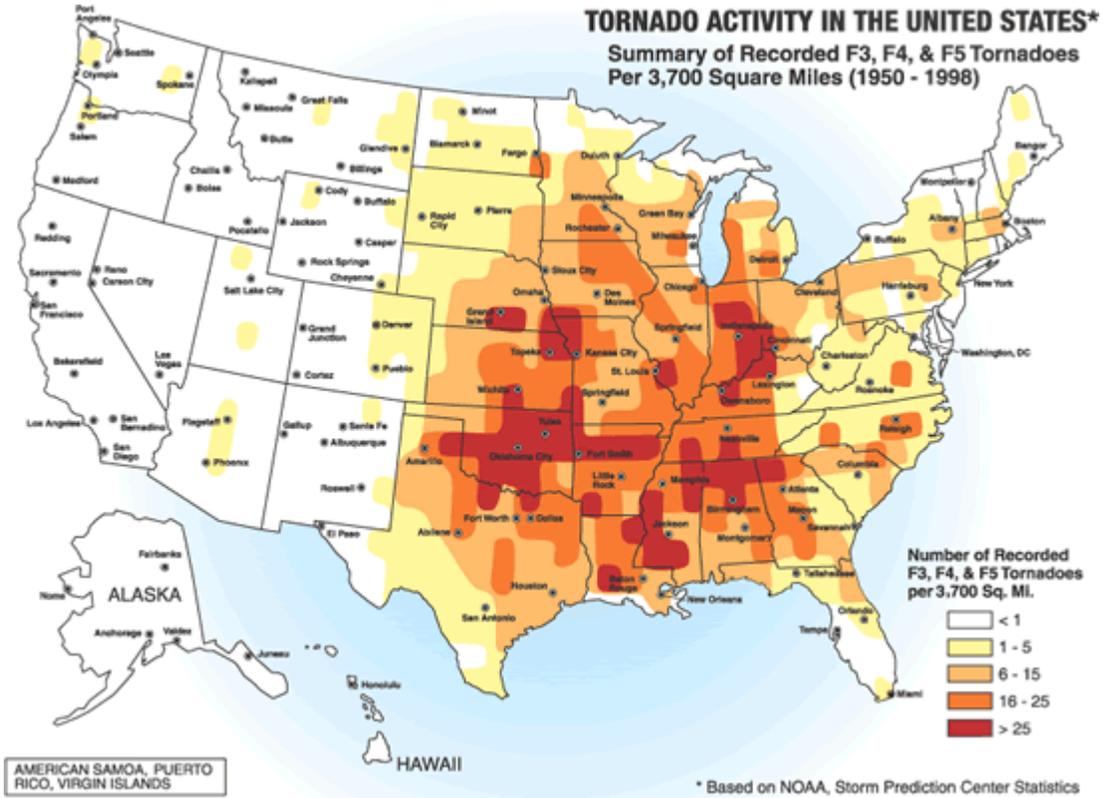
✓ Your Employees

- Ensure you have an emergency communication plan in place prior to the storm, evacuation, or threat.
- Have all employees, vendors, and client contact information on hand.
- During evacuation have a central point of contact for all employees, and ensure you know where your people are located.
- During evacuation consider your phones lines- redirection to cell phones, answering service, Google Voice, or Agility lines could be critical.
- Following the tornado, notify all critical people of next steps, based on damage.



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Tornadoes are classified using the “Fujita Scale”, the intensities shown in the chart below:

Category	Wind Speed (MPH)	Intensity
F0	Less than 73	Gale
F1	73-112	Moderate
F2	113-157	Significant
F3	158-206	Severe
F4	207-260	Devastating
F5	261-318	Incredible