

Know the Terms

TORNADO WATCH

Conditions are favorable for a tornado and that tornadoes are possible. Be prepared to take cover, if necessary.

TORNADO WARNING

A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted or has been indicated by National Weather Service Doppler radar and might be headed your way. When a warning is issued, take cover immediately.

Additional Resources:

FEMA

<http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>

NOAA

<http://www.noaa.gov/features/protecting/tornados101.html>

For More Information:

Call or Email

(804)646-2504

askemergencymanagement@richmondgov.com

Website

<http://www.richmondgov.com/fireEmergencyManagement.aspx>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/RVAEmergencyManagement>

Twitter

@richmondready

Blog

<http://coreemergencymanagement.blogspot.com/>

Tornado Preparedness and Response Guide



City of Richmond Office of Emergency Management



Know the Signs

- Strong, persistent rotation in the base of a cloud.
- Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base – tornadoes sometimes have no visible funnel.
- Hail or heavy rain followed by dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift. Many tornadoes, especially in Virginia, are wrapped in heavy precipitation and can't be seen.



- Loud, continuous roar or rumble, which doesn't fade in a few seconds like thunder.
- If it's night, look for small, bright, blue-green to white flashes at ground level (as opposed to silvery lightning up in the clouds). These lights are power lines being snapped by very strong wind, maybe a tornado.
- Persistent lowering of the cloud base.

If a tornado is headed your way

Go to the building's basement. If there is no basement, move to a small, windowless interior room such as a closet, bathroom or interior hall on the lowest level of the building. Be sure to use the stairs to reach the lowest level, not an elevator. Protect your body from flying debris with a heavy blanket or pillows.

If you are in:

Open buildings (shopping malls, gymnasiums or civic centers):

Try to get into the restroom or an interior hallway. If there is no time to go anywhere else, seek shelter right where you are. Try to get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. Protect your head by covering it with your arms.

Automobiles:

Get out of your vehicle and try to find shelter inside a sturdy building. If no sturdy building available stay in the car with your seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushion. If you can safely get lower than the roadway leave your car and lie in that area, cover your head with your hands. **Do not** take shelter under a highway overpass or bridge.

Outdoors:

Get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If no buildings are close, lie down flat in a ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands.

Mobile homes:

Do not stay in mobile homes. You should leave immediately and seek shelter inside a nearby sturdy building or lie down in a ditch away from your home, covering your head with your hands. Mobile homes are extremely unsafe during tornadoes.