

Tornado Preparedness and Response Guide

City of Richmond Office of
Emergency Management



ENHANCED FUJITA SCALE		DAMAGE
EF-0	(65-85 MPH)	LIGHT
EF-1	(86-110 MPH)	MODERATE
EF-2	(111-135 MPH)	CONSIDERABLE
EF-3	(136-165 MPH)	SEVERE
EF-4	(166-200 MPH)	DEVASTATING
EF-5	(200+ MPH)	INCREDIBLE

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.
- At 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 the elevator. Protect your body from flying debris with a heavy blanket or pillows. If you find yourself:

...in an OPEN BUILDING (shopping mall, gymnasium, civic center, etc.):

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.

...in a VEHICLE:

Get out of your vehicle and try to find shelter inside a sturdy building. If no sturdy building is available, stay in the car with your seat belt on. Put your head down below window level; 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 flat in the lower 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.

...in a MOBILE HOME:

Do not stay in a mobile home. You should leave immediately and seek shelter inside the nearest 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.

Know the difference between a tornado

WATCH

and

WARNING

Be Prepared. A tornado is possible.

- ✓ Check for forecast updates
- ✓ Monitor sky conditions
- ✓ Know where to take shelter

Take Action! A tornado is imminent!

- Take shelter immediately✓**
- Seek further information✓**
- Check for forecast updates✓**

For more information, call 804-646-2504 or email askemergencymanagement@rva.gov

Visit our website: rva.gov/Emergency-Management

Sign up for Code Red Alerts:



rva.gov/emergency-management/codered

Connect with us



Twitter [@richmondready](https://twitter.com/richmondready)



Additional Resources:

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

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