

Tornado CO-CS-PR3

Responsible Officer: Vice President for Administration and Campus Operations

Sponsoring Department: Emergency Management

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PROCEDURE OBJECTIVE

To have faculty, staff, and students take appropriate actions to safeguard themselves and property before, during, and after a tornado.

SCOPE

The procedure applies to all University departments.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility of taking appropriate actions in responding to a tornado watch or warning resides with each individual on campus. The emergency management coordinator is responsible for providing tornado training and information to the campus through appropriate media and when requested.

PROCEDURES

Section I. What to do Before a Tornado

The time to plan for tornadoes is now. Department heads and their employees should seek out the best place for everyone to take shelter if the storm happens during working hours. Everyone should make similar plans at home. Make sure you have a portable radio and flashlight (with extra batteries), a First-Aid kit (along with any necessary medications), sturdy shoes and work gloves, bottled water, and packaged and/or canned food (don't forget the can opener.)

Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to [NOAA Weather Radio](#) or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - Dark, often greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

- A. If you see a tornado near the university, call 2-3003 to report a tornado sighting to the UT Arlington Police Dispatcher or dial 9-911 from a campus phone. Seek a safe shelter inside of a building; or, if this is not possible, lie in a ditch or beside an embankment.
- B. Move smaller objects indoors.
- C. Grills, bicycles, patio furniture, and lawn mowers can become missiles in tornadic winds and cause additional damage.
- D. Stay close to your TV or radio to see if a tornado warning is imminent.
- E. Go to or remain in an area that provides shelter.

Section II. What to do During a Tornado Warning

- A. A warning will be signaled by the outdoor warning sirens and fire panel voice annunciator. Use interior hallways away from the building's exterior windows as a tornado shelter. Close all doors to rooms with exterior windows, and avoid all windows and other glassed areas. The most dangerous locations of a building are usually along South and West sides and at corners. Move to basement or first floor of multistory buildings.

- B. Because of possible power failures, avoid using elevators
- C. Remain clear of glass areas, inner hallways are normally safe. If in a trailer, frame, or sheet metal building and conditions permit, move to a brick or stone building for added protection.
- D. If in a vehicle and no shelter is nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch or culvert and use hands and arms to shield your head and neck. Never attempt to flee from a tornado in a vehicle.

Section III. Tornado Safety Tips

A. In the office or classroom

Have you given any thought about what to do in case the tornado warning sirens sound during office hours? Does your office staff know where to go? What should instructors tell their students?

When the fire panel voice annunciator activates, it is best not to leave the building; obviously, it is better to seek shelter in a basement. If the building you are in has no basement, or if there is no nearby building with a basement, go to the lowest floor and get in a small interior room or hallway. Stay away from glass and exterior walls.

Please share these Tornado Safety Tips with your office staff and others in your department or division. Encourage everyone to make plans for where they will go when severe weather strikes during office hours. A good idea would be to have a drill during the next regularly scheduled outdoor warning siren test (the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.). Emergency Management encourages you to take responsibility for plans in your area.

B. If you are handicapped

Identifying individuals who will need some special assistance in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation is essential. A mobility impaired staff or faculty member should inform their Supervisor of any special needs that they may have either at the time of hire or following a subsequent injury. The Supervisor and Department Safety Liaison (DSL) should discuss special needs with the staff or faculty member in relation to the specific job. This should include the extent of the impairment, access to an Evac-u-chair, and other special needs the individual may have in the event of an emergency. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the DSL shall ensure that the person with physical impairments is assisted, if necessary, to a safe location. The DSL shall also maintain a system of accountability for those persons with physical impairments, including their location and impairment.

Handicapped persons who are mobility impaired must also make plans. If a power outage occurs during severe weather, elevators may not work. Stay put. If you must evacuate, activate your evacuation plan as recommended above.

Evacuation of disabled people who are otherwise ambulatory, such as vision or hearing impaired, should take place normally with other building occupants. They can benefit from an escort and should be provided with one from within the work area.

C. If you are at home/apartment

If you are aware that a tornado watch has been issued for your area, stay tuned to weather alert radio, local radio, or TV weather reports. If you feel the need to seek better shelter than your home can offer, the time to travel to that shelter is when the storm first begins or slightly before.

When the Outdoor Warning sirens sound, it is best NOT to leave your home unless better shelter is just a minute away. If your house does not have a basement, go to the lowest floor and get in a small interior room or hallway. If you have time, you might get in the bathtub and pull blankets or pillows over the tub. Stay away from glass and exterior walls.

D. If you are in a residence hall

When the alarm is sounded (or you hear a warning announcement) grab your pillow and go to the lounge on your floor (don't forget your shoes). Most floor lounges are in the center of the building and are windowless. Know ahead of time what your residence hall's severe weather plan is for your floor. If you are on a floor in the upper half of a high-rise building, the plan may call for you to go to a designated lounge on a lower floor. Severe weather could result in the interruption of electrical power, so avoid the use of elevators. Some residence halls have large glassed-in lobbies; these areas should be avoided because of the glass that could be blown in by a storm. Follow the instructions of hall personnel and don't leave the building until the "All-Clear" is given.

Section IV. What to do After a Tornado

Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical well-being. If assistance is available, knowing how to access it makes the process faster and less stressful.

Be careful when entering any structure that has been damaged or weakened. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves, and gloves when handling or walking on or near debris. Be aware of hazards from exposed nails, broken glass, and broken tree limbs. Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines.

Section V. Outdoor Warning Sirens/Severe Weather

The city's outdoor warning system has a comprehensive network of sirens that alert people who are outdoors to seek shelter. Three of the sirens are located on or near the University. These sirens are located on the roof of Davis Hall, the northeast corner of Pecan and Mitchell Streets, and the baseball fields near Fielder and Park Row Drive.

The University's outdoor warning siren speaker arrays are located on the SW corner of Lot 28, on top of the Architecture Building, and on top of the College of Business Building. The severe weather sirens are NOT designed to be heard inside a building, but to warn those outside to seek shelter. The City of Arlington tests the warning system on the first Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m., weather permitting. The University tests its system on the first Wednesday

of every month at 12:30 p.m. During the test, the sirens are sounded for one minute. In the event of an actual emergency, the sirens are sounded with alternate tones, beginning with a three minute steady tone followed by a one minute pause and a three minute wail. There is no meaning associated with the different tones, they are intended to compensate for people with different levels of hearing. The sirens will continue to sound until the danger has passed. If the sirens sound during inclement weather and you are outside, seek shelter immediately and stay there until the storm has passed.

MavAlert is an electronic notification system for all employees at the University of Texas at Arlington.

For additional information and to sign up go to <http://www.uta.edu/mavalert>.

FORMS AND TOOLS/ONLINE PROCESSES

[MavAlert](#)

DEFINITIONS

Tornado: A tornado is a particularly dangerous severe storm with rotary winds that can exceed 300 miles per hour.

- A. A tornado is usually accompanied by hail, severe thunderstorms, and often, dangerous lightning.
- B. Flying debris may become missiles that injure and kill.
- C. Most tornadoes move from southwest to northeast and generally occur in late spring, but they can happen any time.

Tornado Watch: Conditions are such that storms capable of producing a tornado may develop.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

RATIONALE

This procedure provides guidelines for appropriate actions to take in the event of a tornado.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, REQUIREMENTS OR STANDARDS

UT System Administration Policies and Standards	Other Policies and Standards
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None	<i>Emergency Communications</i> (Procedure 7-1) <i>Outdoor Group Activities/Weather Hazards</i> (Procedure 7-7)
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APPENDICES

N/A

CONTACTS

If you have any questions about Procedure 7-3, *Tornado*, contact the following departments:

Subject	Office Name	Telephone Number	Email/URL
All topics in Procedure	Emergency Management	(817) 272-0117	mohat@uta.edu
	Environmental Health & Safety	(817) 272-2185	ehsafety@uta.edu
Website access	Administrative Information Management	(817) 272-0222	aim@uta.edu http://www.uta.edu/aim

WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS PROCEDURE

<http://www.uta.edu/policy/procedure/7-3>