

## How to stay safe in a tornado or high wind situation

Tornadoes occur with little warning. Listen for weather watches and warnings and be prepared to seek shelter if conditions change quickly. Download the Alberta Emergency Alert app and the Environment Canada WeatherCAN app. Tornadoes often occur within severe summer storms. High winds can occur any time of year.

If you are in a building where a Best Available Refuge Area (BARA) is not identified with signage, there are still safer places where you can take shelter.

- Lower floors are considered safer – below grade (like a basement) is even better.
- Short roof spans (like in hallways) are more likely to remain intact than long roof spans (open areas like gymnasiums or courtyards).
- Solid core doors (as opposed to hollow doors) offer more protection from wind-borne debris.
- Highrise buildings are very unlikely to collapse in tornadoes or high winds but may be susceptible to exterior wall and roof damage.
- Avoid any room with windows (even interior rooms). Glass can blow in and injure you.
- Stairwells are often made of reinforced concrete and typically offer safer refuge.
- Reinforced masonry construction fares better than wood construction.
- Put as many walls between you and the exterior as possible.
- Places like malls with lots of glass and open areas can be dangerous in a tornado or high winds. Try to find an interior hallway or bathroom without windows or glass. Avoid food courts and large open spaces.

If you are outside or in your vehicle when you hear or see a tornado:

- If possible, your best option is to get indoors as soon as you can.
- If there is no indoor shelter available, get out of your vehicle and find a low spot – like a ditch – and lay in it. Cover your head with your arms and hands and wait for the danger to pass.
- Avoid standing under trees (as they are subject to lightning strikes).
- Do not take shelter in underpasses.

If you are at home during a tornado or high winds:

- Most injuries from tornadoes and high winds are due to windborne debris. Ensure anything in your yard or on a balcony is secured, if possible. This should be done in advance; do not go outside if a weather warning has been issued.
- Ensure that pets are inside. Take them to your shelter area with you.
- If you have a basement, it will offer you the best protection. Under the stairs in a basement is generally the safest space in your house.
- If you do not have a basement, then take shelter in an interior room (like a bathroom) without any windows. Get into the bathtub and cover your head.
- Be extremely careful cleaning up once the danger has passed. Do not approach downed power lines. Stay away from uprooted trees. Wear protective gear like gloves, eye protection, boots (preferably with a steel toe), and a hard hat when cleaning up.