



Governor John R. Kasich

American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
Hands On, Central Ohio / Ohio Citizen Corps
National Weather Service
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute
Ohio News Network

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Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 20-26
Ohioans Are Encouraged to Prepare for Tornadoes, Floods and Thunderstorms

COLUMBUS, OH – Ohio got an early start to spring severe weather this year. The National Weather Service (NWS) confirmed that an EF1 tornado touched down in Fairfield County on February 28. According to the NWS, this was the first February tornado since 1993. The state also experienced straight-lined winds, heavy rains and severe thunderstorms – which resulted in moderate to major flooding. The storms are atypical to the ending days of Ohio winters.

“The late-February/early-March storms have demonstrated that we need to be prepared for all severe weather all the time,” said Nancy Dragani, Ohio Emergency Management Agency executive director. “The best defense when faced with floods or tornadoes or any severe weather event preparedness: Be aware of current weather conditions. Have a disaster plan. Practice your plan. Make a supply kit. Stay informed.”

Governor John Kasich proclaims March 20-26 as Severe Weather Awareness Week for Ohio. As part of a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, Ohio will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System on Wednesday, March 23 at 9:50 a.m. During this time, Ohio counties will sound their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to practice their tornado drills and emergency plans.

Know Tornado Terms

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air that extends from the base of a thunderstorm. A condensation funnel does not need to reach the ground for a tornado to be present. A debris cloud beneath a thunderstorm is all that is needed to confirm the presence of a tornado.

A **tornado watch** is issued by the NWS when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the area. Watches are usually issued for four to eight hours. During a tornado watch, review tornado safety plans and be prepared to move to a safe place if conditions worsen. Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for weather updates.

A **tornado warning** is issued by the NWS when a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar or sighted by storm spotters. Most Ohio communities have outdoor warning sirens that sound during storm warnings. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, seek safe shelter immediately. Tornado warnings are usually issued for 30 minutes. Continue to listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for up-to-date weather information.

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Tornado Safety Tips

Whether practicing a tornado drill or sheltering during a tornado warning, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourages everyone to **DUCK**.

D – Go **DOWN** to the lowest level

U – Get **UNDER** something

C – **COVER** your head

K – **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed

- Be prepared for severe weather before a storm watch or warning is issued. Meet with household members to develop a disaster plan to respond to all hazards, including tornado watches and warnings. Conduct regular tornado drills.
- If you are a person with special needs, register your name and address with your local emergency management agency, police and/or fire departments before any natural or man-made disaster occurs.
- The NOAA Weather Radio has alerting tools available for people who are hearing impaired. Some weather radio receivers can be connected to an existing home security system, similar to a doorbell, smoke detector or other sensor. For additional information, visit the NWS NOAA Weather Radio link: http://www.weather.gov/nwr/special_need.htm
- The safest place to be during a tornado is a basement. If the building has no basement or cellar, go to a small, centrally located room on the lowest level of the building, such as a bathroom or closet or interior hallway.
- If you are in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little or no protection from tornadoes.
- If you are outside with no shelter, lie in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under a highway overpass or bridge. You will be exposed to stronger winds and flying debris.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 14 agencies and organizations that are dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan and prepare for severe weather incidents and home emergencies before they happen. For additional information on tornado safety and severe weather preparedness, visit the OCSWA website at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

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