



# Mississippi Emergency Management Agency News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS: TORNADOES**

**PEARL** – Over the past two years Mississippi has experienced more than 150 tornadoes. They are one of the greatest weather threats our residents face each year, but knowing what to do during a tornado will increase your chances of survival.

Tornadoes spawn from powerful thunderstorms and can cause deaths and devastate neighborhoods in seconds, sometimes with little to no warning.

A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Mississippi averages 26 tornadoes and seven deaths per year since 1950, according to the National Weather Service.

Below is what you should do if a tornado is imminent:

### **If you are in your home:**

- Go to the lowest level of the home, an inner hallway, or smaller inner room without windows, such as a closet or bathroom.
- Get away from windows and go to the center of the room.
- Get under a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a workbench or a heavy table.

### **If you are in a mobile home:**

- Evacuate the mobile home, even if it is equipped with tie-downs.
- Take shelter in a building with a strong foundation, or if one is not available, lie in a ditch or low-lying area that is a safe distance away from the mobile home.
- Tornadoes cannot change elevation quickly enough to pick someone up out of a ditch, especially a deep ditch or culvert.

### **If you are at work or school:**

- Go to an inside hallway at the lowest level of the building.
- Avoid places with wide-span roofs, such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways or shopping malls.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

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**If you are outdoors:**

- If possible, get inside a sturdy building with a concrete foundation.
- If shelter is not available, or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building.

**If you are in a vehicle:**

- Never try to out drive a tornado. Tornadoes can lift a car and toss it in the air.
- If there is no time to get indoors, get out of the vehicle and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle.

Governor Haley Barbour declared Feb. 22- 26 Severe Weather Awareness Week in Mississippi.

For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org). You can also learn more about tornadoes and weather by visiting the National Weather Service at [www.srh.noaa.gov](http://www.srh.noaa.gov).

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