



Tornado damage to homes is devastating. While it is impossible to make a home tornado-proof, there are many steps you can take to protect your home.

Before a Tornado

- **Determine the risk of tornadoes in your area.**
 - A map of high risk areas in the United States is available at www.fema.gov/areyouready/tornadoes.shtm
 - The National Weather Service <http://www.weather.gov/>
- **Identify potential hazards on your property.**
 - When inspecting your home, pay particular attention to the windows, doors, roof, gables and connections (roof-to-wall, wall-to-foundation). Weaknesses in these elements of your home make it more vulnerable to significant damage.
 - Secure unstable materials that are outside your home (e.g., patio furniture, fuel tanks).
 - Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a tornado.
 - Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed. Cut weak branches and trees that could fall on your house.
- **Protect your home.**
 - Place furniture so that chairs and beds are away from windows, mirrors, and picture frames.
 - Place heavy or large items on lower shelves.
 - Secure large appliances, especially your water heater, with flexible cable, or metal strapping.
 - Secure top-heavy, free-standing furniture (e.g., bookcases, china cabinets) that could topple to the wall, by using “L” brackets, corner brackets, or aluminum molding.
- **Safeguard your possessions.**
 - Create a room-by-room inventory of your possessions, include receipts and photos.
 - Gather copies of critical documents, such as finance records, insurance policies.
 - Keep these in a secure place (e.g. safe deposit box, waterproof container).

During a Tornado

- **Stay informed.**
 - After moving to a safe location in your house, listen to the radio for further alerts and updates.
 - If there is time, move any large objects that could be a potential danger, out of the room.
 - Do not open windows. You won't save the house, as once thought, and may actually make things worse by giving wind and rain a chance to get inside.

After a Tornado

- **Continue to monitor your battery-powered radio or television for emergency information.**
- **Assess the situation.**
 - Survey damage to the outside and inside of your home.
 - Identify sharp objects, dangerous materials, downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or other hazards (e.g., chemical spills).
 - Be aware of possible structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazards in your home – if you suspect any damage, shut off electrical power, natural gas, and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions.
- **Account for your inventory.**
 - Compare the list with the one prepared prior to the incident.
 - Take photographs of all damage for insurance or emergency assistance purposes.
 - Report any property damage to your insurance agent or company representative immediately after a natural disaster and make temporary repairs to prevent further damage.
- **Cleanup safely.**
 - Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves, and gloves when handling or walking on or near debris.
 - Be aware of hazards that may cause injury to you or others cleaning up - these can include chain saw injuries, electrical or chemical hazards.
 - Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines. Report electrical hazards to the police and the utility company.
 - Use caution with gas powered equipment – dangerous carbon monoxide can be generated; use in well ventilated areas.

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