

# FCAA – WX 103

## Tornado Preparedness

A tornado is a column of violently rotating air, spawned by a thunderstorm, which is connected from a thunderstorm cloud to the ground. It often appears funnel shaped or as a column of debris. Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. Tornadoes usually develop suddenly, and may contain winds that reach over 250 mph. Tornadoes are a threat to human life and responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars of property damage each year in North Carolina. North Carolina averages 31 tornados resulting in 4 fatalities and over 30 injuries annually.

NC Tornado season begins in March and lasts through November. There are two peaks; the highest peak is in April with a smaller peak in other November. A review of 1958 – 2012 statistics shows the following for our counties:

Davidson – 12	Davie – 5	Forsyth – 14
Yadkin – 8	Guilford – 12	Stokes - 6

While those numbers seem small considering they are over a 54 year span, there is no limit to the number of tornados that we can experience. In fact one has to look no further back than April 2011. On April 16, 2011 the worse tornado outbreak in North Carolina history occurred. There were a total of 31 tornados that occurs with 16 of these rated at EF2 or higher and 5 of these EF3's. Several happened just after midnight and several affected areas around our county. Being prepared and knowing what to do save lives.

### Prepare a Home Tornado Plan

- Select a protected location within your home where family members should gather if a tornado is headed your way. This location could be your basement or, if you have no basement then a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. This location should be maintained as uncluttered as possible. Avoid locations where windows are present.
- If you are in a high-rise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Select a place in a hallway in the center of the building away from windows.

### Maintain a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing

- First aid kit and essential medications such as prescriptions, spare eye glasses, etc.
- Canned food for 3 days, a can opener, disposable plates and silverware. Plan on being without power.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Clothing appropriate for the season, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, a flashlight, and extra batteries. **DO NOT USE** Candles or open flame lamps / lanterns.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members and pets.

# FCAA – WX 103

## Tornado Preparedness

### Keep Aware - Listen for Storm Warnings

- Listen to your local NOAA Weather Radio announcements or to commercial radio and television for the latest weather bulletins. Several of our local TV stations have Doppler radar that can give you up to the minute conditions in our area.
- Monitor the AuxComm – ARES Weather Net for updates and alerts.
- Forsyth County AuxComm – ARES Weather Net activation occurs on the 145.470 (-) 100hz repeater.
- Check out Ready Forsyth for more information. <http://www.readyforsyth.org/>
- Know what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means:
  - A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible in your area.
  - A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area. Seek shelter immediately.
- Tornado WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued by our local National Weather Service. If you have a modern weather radio it can be programmed to alert you of weather advisories just affecting your county.

### When a Tornado WATCH Is Issued

- Be ready to take immediate action.
- Listen to your local NOAA Weather Radio, the 145.470 repeater or commercial radio and TV stations for updated storm information.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Blowing debris or the sound of an approaching tornado may alert you. Many people say it sounds like a freight train.

### When a Tornado WARNING Is Issued

- TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION. The tornado may be approaching your area.
- If you are inside, go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects.
- If you are outside, quickly seek shelter in the basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and seek safe shelter.

### After the Tornado Passes

- Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged areas.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions such as evacuation routes and shelters.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage. Do not use candles, open flames, Coleman lanterns or oil lamps because of the potential for Propane and Natural Gas leaks.

During a Tornado the greatest danger is from flying debris so taking shelter in a sturdy building or basement is essential to surviving a Tornado.