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TORNADO INFORMATION

WHERE TORNADOES CAN OCCUR:
Any place in the United States at any time of the year. They happen most frequently in the midwestern, southern, and central States from March through September.

HOW OFTEN DO THEY OCCUR:
The average number of days with tornadoes per year, based on records of recent years, ranged from 41 in Texas to less than 1 per year in States of the Northeast and Far West.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A TORNADO:
Usually a funnel-shaped cloud, spinning rapidly, and extending toward the earth from the base of a thundercloud. When close by, it sounds like the roar of hundreds of airplanes.

TORNADO "WEATHER":
Hot, sticky days with southerly winds and a threatening, ominous sky. However, many such days occur without tornadoes.

CLOUDS:
Familiar thunderstorm clouds are present. An hour or two before a tornado, topsy-turvy clouds appear sometimes bulging down instead of up. The clouds often have a greenish-black color.

PRECIPITATION:
Rain, frequently hail, preceding the tornado, with a heavy downpour after it has passed.

TIME OF DAY:
Mostly between 3 and 7 p.m, but tornadoes have occurred at all hours.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL:
In most cases they move from a westerly direction, usually from the southwest.

LENGTH OF PATH:
Usually 10 to 40 miles (the average length is 13 miles), but they may move forward for 300 miles.

WIDTH OF PATH:
The average width is about 250 yards, but they have cut swaths over a mile in width.

SPEED OF TRAVEL:
25 to 40 miles per hour average, but they have varied from stationary to 68 miles per hour.

WIND SPEED:
Estimated more than 300 miles per hour within the tornado.

CAUSES OF DESTRUCTION:
(1) Violent winds which uproot trees, destroy buildings, and which create a serious hazard from objects blown through the air.

(2) Differences in air pressure which can lift people and automobiles and can cause buildings to collapse.

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INDIANAPOLIS AND MARION COUNTY CIVIL DEFENSE

TORNADO

Safety Rules

When a tornado approaches, your immediate action may mean life or death.

KEEP LISTENING

Local Action—IF SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS DEVELOP turn on your radio or television for information.

In the City of Indianapolis, the Air Raid Sirens will be activated to alert the public. THERE WILL BE A THREE MINUTE STEADY BLAST OF ALL SIRENS INDICATING A STORM WITH TORNADO POSSIBILITIES IS APPROACHING THE AREA. This signal has one significance: TURN ON YOUR RADIO OR TELEVISION FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. This does not mean that a tornado has been sighted in our area, but does indicate a possiblity. Your radio and televison stations will give you more complete information.

IN CITIES OR TOWNS

Seek inside shelter, preferably in a tornado cellar, underground excavation, or a steel-framed or reinforced concrete building of substantial construction. STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS!

In office buildings—stand in an interior hallway on a lower floor, preferably in the basement.

In factories—On receiving a tornado warning, post a lookout. Workers should move quickly to sections of the plant offering the greatest protection in accordance with advance plans.

In homes—the corner of the basement toward the tornado usually offers the greatest safety. In a house with no basement, take cover under heavy furniture in the center part of the house. Keep some windows open, but stay away from them!

IN SCHOOLS

Go to storm cellar or underground excavation if available. If there is no storm cellar but building is of reinforced construction, stay inside, away from windows. Whenever possible, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor. AVOID AUDITORIUMS AND GYMNASIUMS with large poorly supported roofs.

If a building is not of reinforced construction, go quickly to a nearby reinforced building, or to a ravine or open ditch and lie flat.

IN OPEN COUNTRY

Move away from the tornado's path at a right angle. If there is no time to escape, lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch or ravine.

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