



# TORNADOES

# Be prepared for a tornado

Tornadoes in South Africa are relatively rare events, but they can occur in certain regions of the country, especially during the late summer months of November to March. Tornadoes are usually associated with severe thunderstorms and can develop quickly with little warning. In South Africa, tornadoes have been known to occur in the eastern parts of the country, particularly in the provinces of Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. These areas are prone to severe thunderstorms, which can produce the conditions necessary for tornado formation.

If you live in an area prone to tornadoes, it is important to have an emergency plan in place and to stay informed of weather conditions.

Tornadoes can destroy buildings, flip cars and create deadly flying debris.

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground.

Tornadoes can happen anytime.

Tornadoes bring intense winds of 320+ km/h.

Tornadoes can happen anywhere.

Tornadoes look like funnels.

If you are under a tornado warning, find safe shelter right away.

Go to a safe room, basement or storm cellar.

If there is no basement, get to a small, interior room on the lowest level.

Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.

If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.

Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.

Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.

Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

## Prepare NOW

**Know your area's tornado risk.** In South Africa, the provinces of Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng have a greater risk for tornadoes.

**Know the signs of a tornado,** including a rotating funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar – similar to a freight train.

**Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.

**Identify and practise going to a safe shelter** for high winds, such as a safe room. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level in a sturdy building.

## **Survive DURING**

**Immediately go to a safe location** that you identified.

**Take additional cover** by shielding your head and neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around you.

**Listen to the SA Weather Service** or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.

**Do not try to outrun a tornado** in a vehicle.

**If you are in a car or outdoors** and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.

## **Be safe AFTER**

**Keep listening to the SA Weather Service** and local authorities for updated information.

**If you are trapped, cover your mouth** with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.

**Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.**

**Do not enter damaged buildings** until you are told that they are safe.

**Save your phone calls for emergencies.** Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.

**Be careful during clean-up.** Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants and work gloves.

