

Tornado Damage Tornado damage comes from both strong winds and flying debris. The low pressure inside the tornado sucks dust and other objects into the funnel. Tornadoes can move large objects—sheds, trailers, cars—and scatter debris many miles away. One tornado tore off a motel sign in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and dropped it 30 miles away in Arkansas! One of the reasons that tornadoes are so frightening is that they are unpredictable. A tornado can level houses on one street, but leave neighboring houses standing.

Tornadoes are ranked on the Fujita scale by the amount of damage they cause. The Fujita scale was named for the scientist who devised it, Dr. T. Theodore Fujita. The scale goes from light damage (F0) to extreme damage (F5). Luckily, only about one percent of tornadoes are ranked as F4 or F5.

Tornado Safety What should you do if a tornado is predicted in your area? A “tornado watch” is an announcement that tornadoes are possible in your area. Watch for approaching thunderstorms. A “tornado warning” is an announcement that a tornado has been seen in the sky or on weather radar. If you hear a tornado warning, move to a safe area as soon as you can. Do not wait until you actually see the tornado.

The safest place to be during a tornado is in a storm shelter or the basement of a well-built building. If the building you are in does not have a basement, move to the middle of the ground floor. Stay away from windows and doors to avoid flying debris. Lie on the floor under a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a large table. If you are outdoors, lie flat in a ditch.

Reading Checkpoint

What is a tornado warning?

History

History

incredible damage, killed large numbers of people, and changed the course of history.

1588 England

King Philip II of Spain sent the Spanish Armada, a fleet of 130 ships, to invade England. Strong winds in the English Channel trapped the Armada near shore. Some Spanish ships escaped, but storms wrecked most of them.



1620 Massachusetts

1837 North Carolina

The steamship *Home* sank during a hurricane off Ocracoke, North Carolina.



1870 Great Lakes

Learning that more than 1,900 boats had sunk in storms on the Great Lakes in 1869.