

EXTREME WIND EVENTS -TORNADO HAZARDS

Thunderstorms often produce violent rotating columns of wind called tornadoes. The violent rotating winds carry debris aloft that can be blown through the air as dangerous missiles. A tornado may have winds in excess of 300 miles per hour and an interior air pressure that is 10-20 percent below that of the surrounding atmosphere. The typical length of a tornado path is approximately 16 miles, but tracks much longer than that – even up to 200 miles – have been reported. Typically, tornadoes last only a few minutes on the ground, but those few minutes can result in tremendous damage and devastation.

TORNADO WATCH

Issued when weather conditions in your area favorable to the development of tornadoes. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television, and be prepared to act quickly.

TORNADO WARNING

A tornado has been sighted in the area, or indicated on radar. Implement emergency shelter actions for residents and staff! Listen to the NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for weather information.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

WHEN A TORNADO WATCH IS ISSUED

- Keep NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radios or televisions turned on and listen for the latest advisories.
- Keep staff members advised about location, direction and progress of the storms.
- Review the tornado warning procedure with staff.
- Make preliminary duty assignments in case the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning.
- When or if the storm begins to approach the vicinity of the community, increase level of interest and begin to take additional measures.
- Close windows and pull curtains in all areas of the long term care facility.
- Secure outdoor objects such as garbage cans, garden tools, outdoor furniture, etc., to prevent them from becoming missiles in high winds.
- Begin movement of selected residents into hallways and/or basement.
- Shut off lights and close doors to unoccupied rooms and service areas.
- Place as many resident records as possible in a safe place.

WHEN A TORNADO WARNING IS ISSUED

- Seek shelter immediately!
- Clear all large rooms (dining room, activities room, etc.) of residents, visitors and staff personnel.

- Move residents into hallways (first floor of the facility) and away from windows and outside walls.
- If possible, move a comfortable chair from the room into the hallway so residents can sit. Furnish a pillow and blanket so the residents feel more secure. They can provide some protection from small flying debris and can be used for comfort in case of damage to the facility.
- If the facility has a basement, take shelter there. Usually you take shelter when the Tornado Warning is given. However, in the case of a long term care facility, there may be little time to move numerous residents, so it may be wise to move selected residents during the Tornado Watch.
- Close doors to resident rooms.
- Close fire doors to form a protective envelope in the hallway for residents, visitors and staff.
- Staff members should be assigned to each hallway.
- Keep NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radios and/or televisions turned on and listen for latest advisories.

AFTER THE TORNADO PASSES

- Restore calm to the residents.
- Render first aid to residents and staff as necessary.
- Call ambulance as required.
- If numerous residents require hospital treatment, alert area hospital of what to expect.
- Call medical director of the facility, as necessary.
- Check for fires throughout the facility.
- For fires, follow guidance as set forth in the fire plan.
- If not already done, shut off damaged or potentially damaged utilities.
- Call County Emergency Management to request emergency assistance report damage.
- Notify appropriate utility companies.
- Recall off-duty staff as needed.
- Have facility inspected for damage if necessary.
- If the facility is damaged, be responsive to the instructions of the safety officials on the scene.
- Part of, or the entire facility may have to be evacuated. If evacuation is required, follow the procedures established in the plan for evacuation. Use information contained on the current HCFA Form 672 and/or HCFA 802 to help estimate transportation requirement.
- Notify next-of-kin on the status of their relatives.
- Prepare public information media releases.
- Call on volunteer resources as needed.

If the tornado damages the facility, make sure to inform local officials (including the County Emergency Manager).