

# CITY OF MUSCATINE



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
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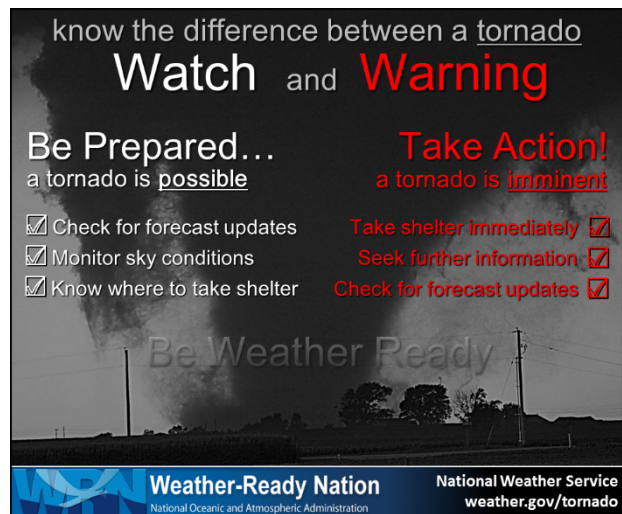
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## TORNADO SAFETY - TAKING SHELTER FROM THE STORM

Iowa Severe Weather Awareness Week March 24-28; know your risk and be prepared

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornadoes are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees, and hurling objects through the air like deadly missiles. Tornadoes can occur at any time of day or night, and at any time of the year. Although tornadoes are most common in the Central Plains and the southeastern United States, they have been reported in all 50 states.



When a **Tornado Watch** is issued it is a call to BE PREPARED as tornadoes are possible in the watch area. Review emergency plans and discuss them with family, friends, or co-workers. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives.

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When a tornado has been sighted or is indicated by weather radar a **Tornado Warning** is issued. This is a CALL TO ACTION with imminent danger to life and property. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building and avoid windows. If in a mobile home, a vehicle, or outdoors, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris.

The following tips for preparing for a tornado and tips for staying safe during a tornado are provided by [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and the [National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov):

- **Know your area's tornado risk.** In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast 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 like a freight train.
- **Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide [emergency alerts](#). If your community has sirens, then become familiar with the warning tone.
- **Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- **Create a communications plan.** Have a family plan that includes an emergency meeting place and related information. If you live in a mobile home or a home without a basement, identify a nearby safe building you can get to quickly, such as a church or family member. Check more ideas for your family plan at [Ready.Gov/Make A Plan](#).
- **Prepare your pets for disasters.** They are an important member of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plan. Tips to help prepare for evacuation of your pet can be found at [Plan for your pet](#).
- **Identify and practice going to a safe shelter.** Pick a safe room in your home, such as a basement, storm cellar, or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.

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A [safe room built using FEMA criteria](#) or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards can also be built.

- **Prepare for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place** by gathering [emergency supplies](#), cleaning supplies, non-perishable [foods](#), [water](#), medical supplies and medication.
- **Help your neighbor.** Encourage them to prepare for the possibility of tornadoes.

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