

MUSIC MATTERS

Volume 25 | 1st Quarter 2021



Key Elements of a Tornado Safety Plan

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The tornado season is here. It is once again time to revisit our tornado safety plan. Our plan includes three primary elements:

1. Preparation
2. Drill
3. Response

Preparation: Being prepared for a tornado starts with a good plan. The first element to consider is to determine where your employee, students, or visitors will be the safest. Ideally, the lowest possible level, in an interior room, is the safest. The use of long halls should be used as a last resort.

Let's review our tornado safe shelters:

- Where are they?
- Do all staff, students, volunteers know where they are located?
- Are they identified with signs?
- Are they clear of clutter?
- Do they have emergency lighting and working flashlights?
- Does the staff know where emergency go buckets are located?



Once your team has identified these safe areas, the information must be shared with your local emergency responders.



It is also important that specified staff is directed to listen to the weather radio and monitor weather conditions.

Drill: All staff should take drills seriously. It is your school's responsibility to assist students as directed by crisis team leaders or your supervisor.

Response: The final key area of the plan needs to include the response after the event. This includes such items as:

- Staff and client accountability
- First aid
- Turning off electric and gas
- Coordination with emergency responders
- Communication with the media and parents .

Many times the response will be determined by the severity of the tornado.

In summary, a good tornado safety plan begins with good planning and preparation. It is vital that your school review your plan yearly to make sure it still is the best possible plan you can have in place. Once you believe you have the best plan in place, then your response team needs to train employees and incorporate practice drills, so the plan will be properly followed in the event of a tornado.

Contact Alan Schmitt with any questions about developing a Tornado Safety Plan.



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