

# TORNADO SAFETY TIPS ON THE FARM

## FACTS

- Tornadoes may strike quickly, with little or no warning.
- In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and over 1,500 injuries.
- They may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms in the funnel.
- Most tornadoes move southwest to northeast, but can move in any direction.
- The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 MPH, but may vary from stationary to 70 MPH. The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more.
- Peak tornado season in the northern states is late spring through early summer.
- Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., but can occur at any time.
- There are several indications that a storm is likely to produce a tornado. These indicators include:
  - large hail
  - dark green or blackish sky color
  - the presence of a rotating wall cloud
  - a loud roar similar to a freight train
- A wall cloud is a lower lying cloud formation with an area of rotation. The area below a wall cloud is usually rain-free.
- The funnel cloud may be obscured by heavy rains, or it may not appear to reach the ground.
- Debris being pulled upwards is a sure sign a tornado is present.

## PREPARE AND PROTECT YOURSELF

Tornadoes strike quickly and often without warning. To prepare yourself for tornadoes, follow these safety tips:

- Know your area's warning signals for tornado watches and warnings. As soon as you hear the signal, take cover.
- Carry a first aid kit with a flashlight and battery operated radio on all farm equipment, particularly the equipment you use far from home.
- Carry a cellular phone or portable radio to keep you connected with family or farm employees.

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- Develop an emergency communication plan to warn people working in the field of pending severe weather and to report in after severe weather strikes.

If you are in the field, far from your home or other shelter, follow these safety tips to protect yourself:

- Take cover as soon as a tornado warning is announced or anytime you see a funnel cloud.
- Never try to outrun a tornado. Get off of farm machinery and get as far away from it as possible.
- If at all possible, get inside a sturdy building in an interior room. Get under a sturdy table or work bench if one is available. Long span buildings on farms can be dangerous and should be avoided. The entire weight of the structure is often supported solely by the outside walls.
- If you are not within sight of shelter, lie in a ditch or other low-lying area. Cover your head and neck with your arms. Thunderstorms often accompany tornados so be aware of the potential for flooding in these areas. Stay away from trees and do not get under a vehicle, no matter what its size.