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# SST NEWS & NOTES

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## *Tornado Safety and You*

[www.truckertotrucker.com/blog/tornados-trucking](http://www.truckertotrucker.com/blog/tornados-trucking)

**With the recent changes in weather we thought we would look up safety tips for if you come across severe weather or tornadoes while on the road.** There is varying options of what to do when you are in your truck and in a storm. The NWS recommends that if you are caught in a tornado, then you should get out and into a nearby building or ditch. The new American Red Cross recommends that if no building is available, stay in the truck (not the ditch)— only get out and take shelter in a ditch as a last resort. Crouch down with your seat belt on and your head below the windshield level, ARC recommends, to avoid being struck by any debris that could crash through the windshield.

### **Hazards of getting out of the truck and into a ditch:**

- Flying and tumbling debris may land on you, possibly even your truck.
- Heavy rain may fill the ditch and threaten drowning, particularly if you are pinned down by debris.
- You may be pummeled by hail.
- You are at risk of being struck by lightning.

### **Hazards of staying in the vehicle:**

- The truck may be rolled or tossed by the tornado and you may be injured or crushed.
- Flying debris may penetrate the vehicle and hit you.

### **Benefits of getting into a ditch:**

- Getting into a ditch puts you below the strong winds and flying debris near and above the prevailing ground level.

### **Benefits of staying in the vehicle:**

- Metal frame and safety glass offer some shielding from strong winds and flying debris, while seat belts and air bags cushion the jolts if the vehicle is overturned or tossed.

### ***What would the severe weather expert do if he driving when a tornado struck?***

***“I can’t see myself getting out of the vehicle. I’d try first to drive away from the tornado — both the NWS and the American Red Cross actually also advocate this,” Forbes says. “If you can determine which way the tornado is moving toward, face your body toward that direction and then go to the right. That is usually toward the south or southeast. The reason that it’s best to head this way is that if you went to the left you would normally get into the region where largest hail and blinding rain occur in the kind of supercell, rotating thunderstorms that often spawn tornadoes. If I had no such driving option and I did***

***feel the urge to get out of my car, I'd try to get into a building, and into a ditch well away from the car as the last resort."***

Recommendations from the National Weather Service:

- If your vehicle is hit by flying debris while you are driving, pull over and park.
- Stay in the vehicle with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushion if possible.
- If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Your choice of whether to stay in your car should be driven by your specific circumstances. Your best choice remains getting to a secure building with a basement or saferoom.
- If you find yourself outside or in a vehicle with a tornado approaching and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you remain at risk whether you stay in your vehicle or seek shelter in a depression or ditch, both of which are last resort options that provide little protection. The safest place to be is in an underground shelter, basement or safe room.
- Following are the recommendations from the American Red Cross:
- If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building. If you cannot quickly walk to a shelter:
- Immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter.
- If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. Now you have the following options as a last resort: Stay in the vehicle with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible. Or, if you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your truck and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Your choice should be driven by your specific circumstances.

Tornadoes strike rapidly, without time for a tornado warning, and sometimes without a thunderstorm in the vicinity. When you are watching for rapidly emerging tornadoes, it is important to know that you cannot depend on seeing a funnel as the clouds or rain may block your view.

Always be aware. Some signs to look for are:

- Strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base.
- Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base — tornadoes sometimes have no funnel.
- Hail or heavy rain followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift. Many tornadoes are wrapped in heavy precipitation and can't be seen.
- Day or night: Loud, continuous roar or rumble, which doesn't fade in a few seconds like thunder.
- Night: Small, bright, blue-green to white flashes at the ground level indicating a thunderstorm (as opposed to silvery lightning up in the clouds). These mean power lines are being snapped by very strong wind, maybe a tornado.
- Night: Persistent lowering from the cloud base, illuminated or silhouetted by lightning — especially if it is on the ground or there is a blue-green-white power flash underneath.

If you notice any of these weather conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV stations or to a NOAA weather radio.

Forbes says the bottom line regarding tornado safety rules is that only a few places are "absolutely" safe in tornadoes, including professionally designed underground storm shelters and in-home shelters. Other safety rules are meant to improve your chances of survival, but don't guarantee it.

One of those safety rules is to get into the lowest, innermost portion of a sturdy building — such as an interior bathroom or closet. Getting under a heavy desk or workbench can also help.

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