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| http://www.lookingglassreview.com/assets/images/Do_tornadoes_really_twist.jpg  Excerpts from “Do Tornadoes Really Twist?”  By: Melvin & Gilda Berger | https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQOZVX6K7khksXc_LJu7Q6wD3LQ9mv-zz9AwuQkfevkB0zYBPbe  Enchanted Learning: Tornadoes <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/weather/tornado/> |

**Q: What is a tornado?**

**A:** A severe windstorm. You know it’s a tornado when you spot a twisting, spinning funnel reaching down from a huge dark cloud. The funnel looks like a huge elephant trunk swaying back and forth. A tornado funnel can be 10 feet to slightly over 1 mile wide.

Some funnels do not extend to the earth. Others touch down and race across land. Still others skip or leap from one point to another. They touch down, plow a path of destruction, and rise up into the air.

**Q: What causes a tornado?**  
**A:** Tornadoes form in thunderstorms, when unstable hot air near the ground rises and meets cooler air above in thunder clouds. Tornadoes can form at any time of the year, but most for from March to August (in Northern Hemisphere).

**Q: Where do most tornadoes strike?**

**A:** The midsection of the United States and Canada. But every state of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, has had at least one tornado.

The record for the most tornadoes in the United States was set in April of 1974. During one 24-hour period, 148 tornadoes slammed through the South and Midwest.

A stretch of land in the middle of the United States is called Tornado Alley. This includes parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. More tornadoes pass through this area than anywhere else in the world.

**Q: What should you do to prepare for a tornado?**

**A:** If you are indoors, move to an underground shelter, such as a basement. If no shelter is available, take cover in an inside closet, bathroom, or hallway on the lowest floor. You can also get under a mattress and cover your head with your hands.

Stay away from windows. The glass may shatter. Also, when there’s thunder and lightning, avoid touching metal objects or exposed wires.

If you are outdoors, run to the nearest tornado cellar. If this is not possible, lie flat in a ditch or low part of the ground. Cover your head with your hands. Remember that flying debris from tornadoes cause deaths and injuries.

If you are in a car, get out right way. Do not try to outrun a tornado. Take shelter in a house or another building.

Your family can prepare for this kind of weather by having a plan in place and a disaster kit ready in your safe spot. Make sure you know where you and your family will go in case of a tornado. Also, having a disaster kit with water, nonperishable food items, tape, batteries, weather radio, flash light, and first aid kit items are all great to have in your safe spot.

**Q: How much damage do tornadoes cause?**

**A:** Plenty. The powerful twisting winds of a tornado can pick up objects as big as trains, carry them up in the air, and then smash them down on the ground. Do you remember the tornado in The Wizard of Oz? The storm comes to Kansas, picks up Dorothy’s house, and carries it far, far away to the magical land of Oz! That was just a movie, but tornadoes have lifted whole houses off their foundations and moved them many feet away.

Tornado damage stays within a narrow path. A house on one side of the street may be smashed to bits. A house on the other side will often note even have one broken window.

**Q: What are some negative effects of tornadoes?**

**A:** Tornadoes can cause a lot of damage to cities and towns. Houses, schools, and businesses can all be damaged or destroyed in a tornado. Trees, cars, and other objects can be picked up from the ground and thrown and smashed into the ground. Sadly, may people lose their lives in tornadoes each year. This is why it is so important to take shelter during a tornado.

**Q: What are some positive effects of tornadoes?**

**A:** Even though experiencing a tornado is not positive, may people come to help after a tornado. Disaster relief agencies, like the Red Cross, send many groups of people in to help a community after a tornado. These people provide food, clothing, and financial help to people after a devastating event, like a tornado. Many people will donate money to disaster relief agencies, collect food, clothes, and other supplies to send to people who have been affected. Tide, the laundry detergent company, sometimes will send a big truck that has washers and dryers on it to a disaster site and wash people’s clothes for FREE. Habitat for Humanity will also send people to help rebuild neighborhoods and houses after a natural disaster. Many people will come and help raise up homes in a matter of days! After tornadoes, communities come together and help one another get their lives back on track.