Policy title	Category
Tornado Procedure	Administration Athletics Facilities Human Resources Public Safety/Risk Management
Owner Risk Management Committee	**Approved by** Administrative Council

Purpose of this policy

Tornadoes are regionally common and are considered dangerous. Being aware of and following the tornado safety policy and related procedures can greatly reduce the risk of injury or death. This set of procedures will apply to all employees, students, and guests of Nebraska Wesleyan University. This policy may also apply to NWU sponsored events at off-site locations.

Tornado watches and warnings are issued by the National Weather Service. When the possibility exists for a significant threat, a Watch or Warning will be issued for Lancaster County.

Tornado Watch: conditions are favorable in our area for tornados to develop.

Tornado Warning: a tornado has been sighted or radar indicates rotation in the clouds.

Policy statement

The Vice President for Finance and Administration, Provost, and Director for Public Relations will monitor severe weather through various weather-related apps and the National Weather Service. In the event of a tornado warning within Lincoln city limits, city sirens will sound for specific city quadrants, and a university text notification will go out through the Nebraska Wesleyan Alert System. Radio stations and television stations will also announce relevant weather conditions.

Note: when city sirens stop sounding, it does **NOT** indicate the "warning" has expired or that activities can resume. Once the National Weather Service determines the warning can expire, an “All Clear” message will be sent via the Nebraska Wesleyan Alert System when normal activities can resume.

In the event of a Tornado WATCH, DO:

- **Keep your eye on the sky**. Weather conditions can change rapidly.
- **Be aware of designated tornado shelter areas** for your current location.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions by **checking a weather app**, listening to your cell phone for **announcements by the National Weather Service**, or listen to radio or television stations that announce relevant weather conditions for the area you are located.
- Contact the Physical Plant Security Office at 402-432-9238 for additional information or questions about a tornado watch.

In the event of a Tornado WARNING, DO:

- **Take shelter immediately in a designated indoor shelter**. If no designated area is available, take shelter in a basement, interior hall, or interior room with no windows. If outdoors and you are unable to get to a designated shelter, lay flat in a ditch or depression. If you are in a vehicle, get out of the vehicle and take shelter in a designated area, ditch, or depression. Never try to outrun a tornado. Be sure to protect your head.

- **If you are in a University Building, there will be postings near the entrance of the building identifying the designated shelter area**. Use stairs to get to the lowest level of the building and stay away from windows.
- **If a tornado strikes in your immediate area, do not use phones or cell phones unless you have an emergency**. This will help prevent cell phone and telephone overloads.
- Contact the Physical Plant Security Office at 402-432-9238 for additional information or questions about a tornado warning.

Individuals with disabilities

Supervisors and course instructors are responsible to identify and escort individuals with disabilities to tornado shelters, in the event of a tornado warning. Elevators may be used to transport individuals with disabilities to the shelter, provided the building has power. If the building has lost power, shelter the person with a disability in an interior room with no windows, or have someone help the disabled person to the designated tornado shelter.

List of Designated University Tornado Shelter Areas:

- There will be postings near the entrance of the building identifying the designated shelter area.
- There will be a list of the designated shelter areas for each building maintained by the Physical Plant Security Office and posted on the NWU Campus Safety/Emergency Information at: **https://www.nebrwesleyan.edu/inside-nwu/campus-safety/emergency-information#tornado**

Athletic Events: In the case of inclement weather including a Tornado Warning, a member of the Athletic Training Staff will monitor threatening weather and make the decision to remove a team or individuals from an athletic site or event. The officials, administration and athletic trainer will discuss and decide on the continuation or termination of such event. In the event that the competition is postponed, all spectators, officials, athletes, and support staff will evacuate the facility and seek shelter in an available designated shelter area until the game or event resumes. For more specific instructions for Athletic events, see the NWU Emergency Action Plan for facilities at **https://nwusports.com/sports/2020/9/9/emergency-action-plans**.

Resumption Procedure after a Tornado Warning:

The Vice President for Finance and Administration, Provost, and Director for Public Relations will confirm the expiration of the Tornado Warning and communicate when it is safe to resume activities. This will be communicated through the NWU Alert System for campus locations. As weather is different in various locations and can change from area to area, please stay tuned to the National Weather Service Warnings and Watch notifications for additional weather announcements, about your specific location.

Employees Working Outdoors:

Supervisors and workers need to be aware if a **tornado watch** is in effect.

Physical Plant Employees will be informed of a **tornado warning** or an approaching tornado by radio or personal contact. The employees should take shelter in any of the campus buildings and wait for the storm to safely pass prior to resuming outdoor activities.

System Testing:

The Lancaster County Civil Defense tests the city tornado sirens monthly. A test Tornado Watch will be posted at 10:00 am followed by the emergency sirens on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:15a.m.

To learn more about tornado safety go to: **https://www.weather.gov/safety/tornado**

Last revised date
August 1, 2024