

Family Tornado Readiness Guide

By Providence Storm Shelters — for families with and without a storm shelter

Start here — calm beats panic

Tornado readiness isn't about being fearless. It's about being ready enough that your family can move on muscle memory at 2 a.m. Lights out, wind howling, kids half-asleep — you've got this. The goal is a simple plan everyone understands and can follow without thinking.

Your 5-minute quick start

1. **Pick your safe place now.**
 - **With a shelter:** that's your spot. Keep a clear path to the door at all times. Providence shelters are EF-5 rated and engineered to exceed FEMA 320/361 and ICC-500, with doors, walls, and roof built for extreme debris impact.
 - **Without a shelter:** If no safe room or storm shelter is available, go to a basement or small interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows, and protect your head and neck.
2. **Write a one-page plan.** Where to go, who helps whom, where the pet leashes are, which neighbor you check on, and how you'll get alerts.
3. **Set up three alerts.** NOAA weather radio, Wireless Emergency Alerts on phones, and one local broadcast source. Keep the radio at your safe place.
4. **Pack a 10-minute kit.** Start with radio, headlamps, meds, water, pet leash, and shoes.
5. **Do a 60-second drill tonight.** Lights off, bedrooms to safe place, door closed, count heads, time it.

Encouragement: One practice run changes everything — kids feel braver, and sleepy adults move faster.

Alerts, decisions, and getting there fast

Watch means conditions are favorable for a tornado event — review your plan.

Warning means a tornado is indicated or spotted — move now.

Night reality: Many deadly events in the Southeast happen after dark. Keep shoes, a flashlight, and a phone by the bed. Teach the latch steps for your shelter door so anyone can close and pin it. Providence doors use robust multi-point hardware designed to stay aligned under load.

Write names on your plan:

- **Adult A:** wake kids, carry youngest.

- **Adult B:** grab 10-minute kit and pets.
- **Teen:** turn off stovetop, meet at shelter door.
- **Kid helper:** carry the comfort bag.

Path discipline: Keep the route open. No bikes, bins, or boxes in the way — ever. In garages, maintain 36 inches of clearance to the shelter door. Providence’s standard 36-inch doors on 5×8 and larger models make entry smoother.

If you’re in a vehicle: Don’t try to outrun a close tornado in town. Get inside a sturdy building if possible. If not, lie flat in a low spot and cover your head, then move to proper shelter as soon as you can.

The 10-Minute Kit — grab and go checklist

Pack it in a small bin or backpack stored at the safe place. Check batteries monthly.

Core items

- NOAA weather radio set to your county + spare batteries
- Two headlamps + spare batteries, plus one small lantern
- Medications for 72 hours, list of prescriptions, basic first aid
- Power bank + phone cables
- Water — at least 1 gallon per person set aside for storm season
- Sturdy shoes for each person
- Whistle and small multi-tool
- Pet leashes/harnesses, collapsible bowl, 24-hour supply of pet food
- Copies of IDs and key phone numbers in a zip bag

Shelter add-ons

- Door wedge or rubber block so the door doesn’t slam during entry
- Comfort items — soft blanket per child, foam ear protection
- Laminated 1-page plan on the wall
- For Providence shelters — a 7/16-inch nut driver or the tool your installer recommends for quick checks; warranty info stored inside

No-shelter add-ons (*interior room*)

- Two cushions or bike helmets for head protection
- Heavy blanket to drape over the group
- If space allows, a small mattress to lay across laps for impact resistance

Pro tip: Label a shelf, peg, or hook for each item. At 2 a.m., muscle memory beats memory.

Practice, kids, pets, and special situations

Monthly 60-second drill

- Start at bedrooms, lights off
- Walk quietly to the safe place, close and latch the door
- Each person touches headlamp and radio, then says “I’m here”
- End with a high-five — keep drills positive

Helping children

- Make a comfort bag — soft toy, coloring pad, stickers
- Teach a calm script: “When we hear the alert, we go to our strong room. Grown-ups know what to do.”
- For sensitive kids, practice with low light and ear protection so the real thing feels familiar

Pets

- Hang leashes by the shelter door and practice guiding pets inside
- If your pet hides during storms, reward calm time near the shelter now
- In compact shelters, use one anchor point for two small leashes to keep the floor tidy (*Providence interiors can include shelving and leash-friendly anchor spots.*)

Mobility, medical, and caregiving

- Keep a folding stool or stable seat 17–19 inches high for anyone who can’t sit on the floor easily
- Tape a “handoff card” inside the shelter with diagnoses, allergies, devices, and contacts
- For powered medical devices, keep a fully charged, appropriate power bank or discuss short-term alternatives with your provider

Encouragement: The first drill feels awkward. By the third, it feels routine. Calm is a skill — practice builds it.

If you have a storm shelter — set it up to succeed

Know your protection:

Providence Storm Shelters are EF-5 rated, built from ¼-inch steel plate with reinforced roof channeling, debris-tested using Texas Tech Wind Science Research Center protocols, and

engineered to exceed FEMA 320/361 and ICC-500. With proper use and anchoring, you get great protection.

Place and path:

Garages are ideal — flat slab, shortest route from bedrooms, weather-protected approach. Providence offers sizes from 2–4 person up to 10–15 person rooms, with 36-inch doors on larger models for faster entry.

Comfort basics:

Cross-ventilation matters. Providence designs include shielded vents with options for extra vents. Add a quiet fan on a power bank for longer holds. Get headlamps for all, one small lantern, and foam earplugs to reduce stress.

Dual-use without compromise:

Workbench and countertop models serve daily life yet remain ready in seconds. Mark an “always clear” zone on the work surface so nothing slows you down during a warning.

Five-minute quarterly check:

Open and latch the door three times, visually inspect anchors, click lights, spin the fan, check radio battery, update the meds list, and note the date on a sticker inside the door.

Reassurance you can point to:

Providence carries an A+ BBB rating and is known for expert installation and service. Keep their contact info inside the shelter binder.

If you don't have a shelter yet — strengthen today, plan tomorrow

Make the best room better now

- Choose the smallest, most interior, lowest-level room
- Add density to the wind-facing wall with heavy furniture
- Keep a mattress or thick blankets handy to shield from debris
- Store bike or sports helmets in that room to reduce head injuries

Shorten the path

- On high-risk nights, sleep with doors open and shoes by the bed
- Stage the 10-minute kit in that interior room

Decide on a shelter with clear criteria

- EF-5 rating, ¼-inch steel, deep roof channels, debris-tested door, and professional anchoring into a reinforced slab — the non-negotiables
- Place it where you can reach it fast — garage or interior utility room first
- Ask about sizes for 2–15+, workbench or island configurations, extra vents, digital locks, shelving, and finish colors

Financing and timing

- Building or remodeling? Plan the shelter during design to solve power, lighting, and path on day one
- Retrofits are quick — Providence handles site evaluation, anchoring, and clean up. Clear the garage, arrange pet care, and do a practice entry with the installer before they leave

Encouragement: You don't need to solve everything this week. Do one improvement today, schedule a consult next, and keep practicing the drill.

After the storm — steady steps forward

When the all-clear sounds

- Open carefully and scan for hazards like downed lines or gas smells
- Everyone puts on shoes and gloves before stepping out
- Count neighbors; check on those living alone, seniors, and families with infants; share water, chargers, and calm

Document and recover

- Photograph damage before moving debris
- If water reached the electrical panel, shut off breakers and call a pro
- If the home is damaged but the shelter is intact, use it as a short-term staging area for calls and coordination

Build a block-level plan

- Swap your one-page plan with next-door neighbors and collect theirs
 - Share spare keys and phone numbers with one trusted household
 - If three houses on the street have shelters, create a group text check-in protocol (*Providence's range of sizes makes multi-household planning easier.*)
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Why families choose Providence

- EF-5 rated across the line, engineered to exceed FEMA 320/361 and ICC-500, debris-tested at Texas Tech
- ¼-inch steel plate, reinforced roof channeling, solid-weld construction, and professional slab anchoring
- Options that fit real life — larger 36-inch doors, extra vents, shelving, windows, digital locks, finishes, and sizes for 2–15+
- Workbench and countertop models that give you daily utility without sacrificing speed or safety
- Expert, courteous installation and an A+ BBB rating

You don't have to be perfect to be prepared. You need a clear plan, a reachable safe place, and a few simple tools you can find in the dark. Do one drill this week. Update your kit next week. And if a shelter is right for your family, choose one that's tested, installed by pros, and easy to reach when the rain is pounding and everyone is tired. That's how you win the scariest ten minutes of the year.

Providence Storm Shelters — strong rooms, strong decisions, strong families.

5510 East Division Street, Suite 126, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

Call 615-547-4880 to talk placement, sizing, and options, or **visit**

ProvidenceStormShelters.com to see models and schedule a showroom tour. *(Providence serves families across the Southeast and customizes shelters to fit your home and your life.)*

Print this guide and tape Page 1 near your fridge or shelter door.

Share a copy with a neighbor. Safety spreads.