

Tornado Information

Since the recent tornado on March 18, 2012 that struck Lincoln County at approximately 9:10 PM CST; many have called and asked where are the local tornado shelters or what should one do to protect themselves. Below are a few tips and links for tornado safety that we highly recommend. The Lincoln County Emergency Management Office subscribes to “Shelter In-Place” safety for tornados and severe thunderstorms. There are no designated community tornado shelters in Lincoln County.



North Platte is a StormReady city and we have:

- Incorporated the community’s severe weather threats into our community’s hazard mitigation and emergency response plans;
- Establish a 24-hour Warning Point and Emergency Operations Center;
- Establish multiple ways to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public; (CodeRED, NWS Alerts, Warning Sirens)
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally; and,
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars, severe weather spotter training and by conducting emergency exercises.

Basic information and historical data can be found at this hyperlink below

<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lbf/?n=100828lbfatorclimo>

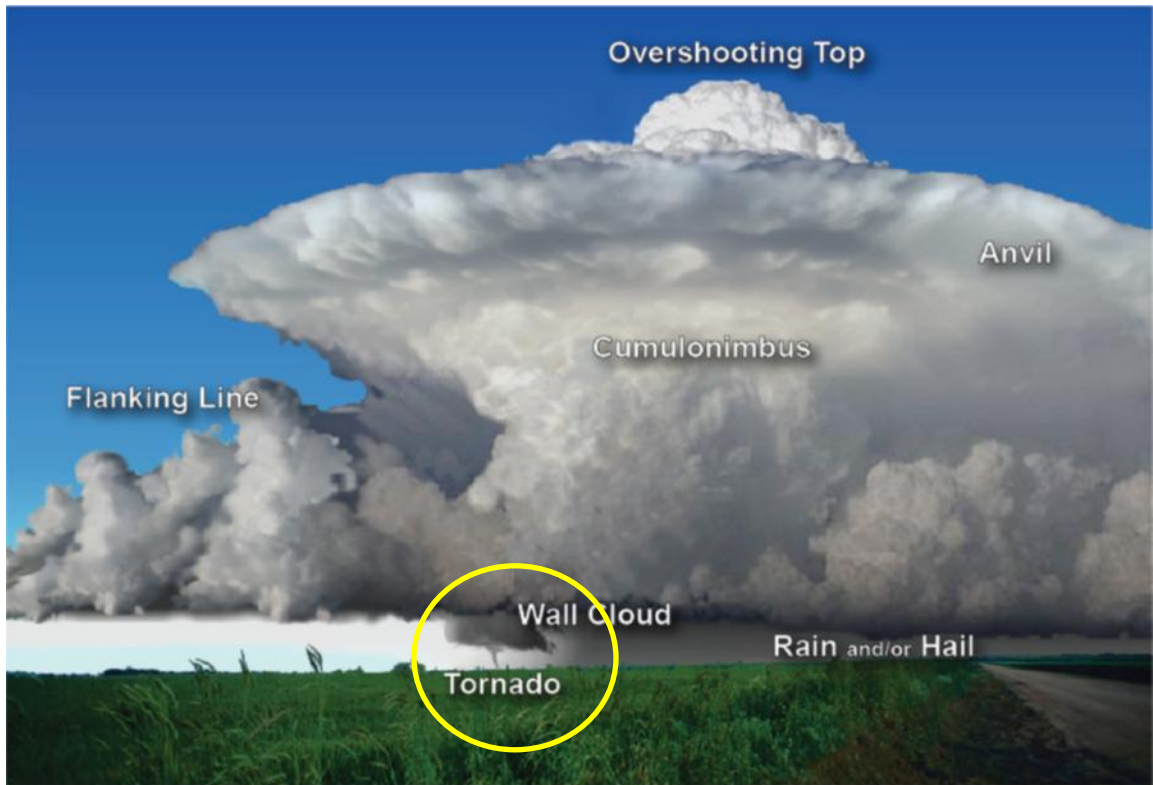
It provides information from 1950 – 2008 on tornados in this area of Nebraska. Of special note, 71 tornados have been recorded in Lincoln County during this period and only 7 injuries have been recorded with no deaths from tornados.

This hyperlink http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lbf/?n=tornado_safety provides safety tips and explains the difference between “**Watch**” and “**Warning**”; it is important to understand the distinction between these two words.

Watch these two videos:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/severeweather/multimedia/Tornado_Extended_Med_Alt.wmv

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/severeweather/multimedia/tornado_car_small_short.wmv



Tornado Safety

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air attached to a thunderstorm and in contact with the ground, whether or not a condensation funnel is visible to the ground. The picture above illustrates a typical thunderstorm system with a wall cloud and tornado. Debris or dirt swirling on the ground, under an area of cloud base rotation, may be a clue that it is a tornado and not a funnel cloud or gustnado. The high winds and flying debris associated with a tornado pose a significant threat to people. Here are a few safety tips if you encounter a tornado:

- Watch for other tornadoes that could form in the vicinity of the tornado you are watching.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in an urban or congested area. Immediately get into a sturdy structure after parking your car out of the traffic flow.
- Do not take shelter under bridges or overpasses. These structures do not offer protection and could increase the chance of injury or death.
- If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building. If you cannot quickly get 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. You have the following options as a last resort:

- Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands or a blanket if possible.
- If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your car, and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.
- Flying and falling debris is the biggest hazard in a tornado. To be safe, you should get inside, get down and cover up. Underground or in a Safe Room is your first choice. If no underground shelter is available, get to the center of a sturdy building on the lowest level. Put as many walls between you and the tornado as possible. Stay away from windows and doors. Cover up to help minimize being injured by flying or falling debris.