



Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Office of Emergency Management

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Practice your Tornado Shelter Plan – Register for the March 22 Statewide Tornado Drill

The **Statewide Tornado Drill is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22, at 9:45 a.m.** The Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management encourages every home, business, organization, and school to participate in the annual statewide tornado drill.

On February 24th, the National Weather Service confirmed at least eight tornadoes touched down in Virginia and killed four people. Tornadoes are common in Virginia, so it is critical that everyone knows what to do when a tornado warning is issued.

To alert the community, the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management will send out a test alert through the CodeRED community emergency alert system. Additionally, the National Weather Service will send a test tornado warning through all NOAA Weather Radios. This will prompt local radio and TV stations to broadcast a test message.

The Office of Emergency Management recommends all citizens and businesses in the Charlottesville-Albemarle region to register for the CodeRED Weather Warning. By registering, citizens will receive tornado, severe thunderstorm, and flash flood warnings. Citizens can choose how they are warned, including home phone, cell phones, and email addresses. To register, visit www.communityemergency.org or the Office of Emergency Management can be reached at 971-1263 or 970-1798 (8:30 AM-5:00 PM) if you need help with registration for any reason (e.g., no computer, no e-mail, problems with the registration form, etc.). If calling during non-business hours, leave a message and your call will be returned.

When a tornado warning is issued:

- Go immediately to a safe place – usually the lowest level of your home, office or school away from windows – and stay there until the warning expires.
- If there is no basement, go to a windowless interior room such as a closet, bathroom or interior hallway.



- Crouch as low as possible to the floor, face down and cover your head with your hands.
- Get instructions on how to hold a drill and register now for the Statewide Tornado Drill at www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/tornadoes

How to conduct a tornado drill:

Designate one or more people in your organization or home to coordinate your drill and have them follow the steps below.

Before the drill:

- Inform people about the tornado drill.
- Make sure they understand what will take place and where the safest place is.
- The safest place typically is a building's basement away from windows. If there is no basement, go to a windowless interior room such as a closet, bathroom, or interior hall on the lowest level of the building.

During the drill:

- Announce the start of the drill through a public address system or by going room to room and floor by floor.
- Have people move as quickly as possible to the nearest safe place. Use stairs to reach the lowest level of a building; avoid using elevators.
- When people reach the safe area(s) inform them to crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down and cover their heads with their hands.
- After everyone has sheltered, announce the tornado has passed and the drill is over.

After the drill:

- Make note of any necessary changes in the shelter procedures.
 1. Do more safe areas need to be identified?
 2. Are some safe areas cluttered and need to be cleaned out to be more accessible?
 3. Do employees know the fastest routes to take to safe areas?
 4. Is a better method for letting employees know of an approaching tornado needed?

Register for the Statewide Tornado Drill:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016TornadoDrill

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