



TORNADO SAFETY Q & A

The Prosper Fire Department Office of Emergency Management's highest priority is ensuring the safety of all Prosper residents during a state of emergency. A tornado is one of the most violent storms that can rip through an area, striking quickly with little to no warning at all. Because the aftermath of a tornado can be devastating, preparing ahead of time is the best way to ensure you and your family's safety. Please read the following questions about tornado safety, answered by Prosper Fire Chief Ronnie Tucker and Prosper Emergency Management Specialist Kent Bauer.

Q: During severe weather, what does the Prosper Fire Department do?

A: We monitor the weather alerts sent out by the National Weather Service. Because we are not meteorologists, we do not interpret any sort of storms or any sort of warnings. Instead, we pass along the information we receive from the National Weather Service to our residents through social media, storm sirens and Smart911 Rave weather warnings.

Q: What does a Tornado Watch mean?

A: Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.

Q: What does a Tornado Warning mean?

A: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar and you need to take shelter immediately.

Q: What is the reason for setting off the Outdoor Storm Sirens?

A: To alert those who are outdoors that there is a tornado or another major storm event headed Prosper's way, so seek shelter immediately. If you are outside and you hear the sirens go off, do not call 9-1-1 to ask questions about the warning. Instead, go inside and stay tuned to a NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.

Q: If you are awakened by an outdoor siren, Tornado Warning weather alert on your phone or a Tornado Warning weather alert from your NOAA Weather Radio, what should you do?

A: Get up, gather all of your family members and go to your safe place in your home. Once again, do not call 9-1-1 to ask about the warning. Instead, head to your safe place in your home. During a tornado, that is NOT the time to be deciding where the safe place in your home is. Plan ahead. Before any severe weather occurs, you should have a safe room ready, already practiced by you and your family, and already containing an emergency kit. To learn about how you can prepare yourself before a tornado, such as determining what your home's safe room is, or what an emergency kit contains, visit <http://www.knowwhat2do.com/think/tornado> or <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>.

Q: If the sirens turn off, is the danger gone? When can people come out of their safe place?

A: Do not come out of your safe place until your local news, NOAA Weather Radio or mobile weather alert has stated that everything is clear. The sirens are only designed to run for three minutes before turning off, so just because they turn off, doesn't mean it is safe to come out. All the sirens are saying is "You are outside, and there is potentially a weather issue coming your way. Seek shelter and pay attention." Go inside and tune in to your local news, radio or social media and pay attention to any warnings for the area. The sirens may also be set off more than once. Prepare for any situation you may be in during a tornado, whether it's being on the road, a business building, outside, or in your home by visiting <http://www.knowwhat2do.com/think/tornado> or <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>.

Q: Where can I sign up to receive weather alerts on my phone or email?

A: Create a free, safe and secure Safety Profile with Smart911 and opt-in to receive notifications. You can elect to receive SMS (text), email, or voice notifications. This may include emergency and/or non-emergency communications. Once you create an account and specify your addresses, the notification services available to you will be listed on the Preferences page, in a section titled Notifications Preferences. The Device Preferences section allows you to choose which of the contacts associated with your account (mobile phones, landlines, and email addresses) you wish to receive notifications. The Notification Preferences section allows you to select which types of notifications you wish to receive. You must select at least one Device Preference and one Notification Preference to receive notifications. Please note that not all messages will be sent via all communication modes. We recommend you select all available Devices and Notification types (text, voice, email) to ensure you receive all notifications you are interested in. (information provided by Smart911's FAQ webpage). There are also many weather apps out there where you can download and receive weather alerts.

Q: When I sign up for the Smart911 Rave alerts, why do I receive multiple weather alerts?

A: Rave sends out warnings issued in cities on our borders that could impact Prosper. It is done by address and a geographical locator.

Q: What do you recommend people do to prepare for a tornado?

A: First suggestion would be for people to create an emergency plan with their family. Designate a safe place in the home where the family can meet during severe weather. Another suggestion would be to establish emergency contact information so if there was potential damage, people would know how to contact them or if they have a missing child or family member. Know what to do before and after a tornado occurs. If you go to the Town's website, under the Fire Department's page, there is a tab for Emergency Management. Under this page, you can go to KnowWhat2Do and learn about hazards and how to prepare for them. You can actually go on that site and it will walk you through writing your own emergency plan. Sign up for the alerts. Reach out to your community and join your local CERT team to find out more about hazards and learn how to prepare for them.

