

ESP FOCUS

Windstorms
Tornadoes



You don't want to be blown away!

High winds, particularly the hot, dry Santa Ana winds that visit Southern California every fall, are another force of nature with which residents must reckon.

High winds can cause structural and nonstructural damage, down power lines and increase the risk of wildfire. In some isolated canyon areas, Santa Ana gusts can reach speeds of more than 100 miles per hour, increasing the threat.

Although tornadoes are more common in midwestern and southern states such as Iowa, Kansas and Texas, Southern California is not immune.

The region averages about 20 tornadoes or water spouts per year. According to the National Weather Service, tornadoes usually occur along the coast during the cold of winter, but they can occur during the summer.

Wherever you live, work or play, use the recommendations on the reverse side of this *Focus Sheet* to help reduce your risk of death, injury and property losses from high winds and tornadoes.

Each month, ESP will examine a different hazard that could affect Californians and offer suggestions on how to reduce its impacts. These hazards are not limited to the month featured in the ESP Focus Sheet and can occur at any time.



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Flyer funded in part by a contribution from:

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N O V E M B E R

Before a Windstorm or Tornado

Take the following actions to reduce your risk of death, injury and property damage:

- Develop an emergency plan for your family. It should include:
 - Name, address and phone number of an out-of-state contact
 - Location of safe spots:
 - Basements Storm cellars
 - Lower-level closets Lower-level hallways
 - Sturdy desks or tables on lower floors
 - Location of danger spots:
 - Windows Doors
 - Location of emergency shelter or place where family members can reunite
 - Plans for placing pets if family members evacuate
- Check and update emergency supply kits.
- Locate utility shut-offs:
 - Electricity Gas Water
- Teach responsible family members when and how to turn off utilities
- Learn first aid and CPR
- Inventory documents and valuable possessions. Store them in a safe deposit box or another safe location
- Work with representatives from local government and the American Red Cross to identify possible shelter sites
- Check your home and roof for compliance with local building codes
- Secure antennas, satellite dishes and other roof fixtures.
- Install storm shutters or board windows with 5/8" exterior plywood.
- Trim tree branches in contact with or near the roof and other parts of your home.
- Conduct practice and evacuation drills.
- Make sure your gas tank is full. Power outages might make fuel pumps unusable.

Before or During a Watch or Warning

- Listen to an Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio or television station and/or purchase a weather alert radio.

During the Windstorm or Tornado

Take the following actions to reduce the risk of injury:

- Evaluate the impact of the winds on the fire hazard in your area
- Go indoors. Avoid areas near windows and doors. Take cover under sturdy desks or tables located in an interior room on the lowest floor of your home. Protect your head and neck with your arms. Interior rooms include:
 - Bathrooms with no windows
 - Closets
 - Hallways

- Avoid using elevators. High winds may cause a power outage
- If outdoors, get away from trees, walls, signs, power lines and other objects that could fall and injure you
- Listen to the radio or watch television for information and instructions from local officials
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies or damage to local officials
- Review emergency and evacuation procedures with family members, including:
 - Shelter site or meeting place
 - Out-of-state contact
- Prepare to evacuate if asked to do so by local emergency officials
- Drive only in a life-threatening emergency
- Avoid disaster areas
- Cooperate fully with local emergency officials

After the Windstorm or Tornado

- Check yourself and family members for injuries. Treat those with minor injuries. Transport those with major injuries to the emergency room
- Keep family members together
- Discuss what happened with children
- Check for and document damage and hazards:
 - Broken windows
 - Ceilings, roofs, walls
 - Damaged utilities
 - Electricity Gas Water
- Downed or damaged trees
- Downed signs or power lines
- Stay out of obviously damaged buildings.
- Cooperate with local emergency officials.

Sources for this document included the FEMA publications "Tornado Safety Tips" and "Hurricane-floods: Safety Tips for Coastal and Inland Flooding."

GETTING IT DONE IN 2001 PREPARING FOR ALL HAZARDS



This action sheet is produced as part of the Earthquake Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase individual and home earthquake preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES); representatives from Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Yuma counties; and representatives from Southern California Edison assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.