

Tornado: Tips for Early Recovery

Tips for Early Recovery

Here are the tips assembled in May 2012 by Virginia White (AL), from shared [EDEN and Extension resources](#). If your state was hit by the same series of storms, you may find these useful.

- Take care of yourself and your family first. Make sure your tetanus shot is up-to-date. Get plenty of fluids, eat right, and try to get enough sleep. Talk to your friends and family—it's the best stress reliever.
- Reenter your property safely. Wear clothing appropriate to the task: closed-toe shoes, long pants, leather or work gloves, protective eyewear. Use dust masks/filters to reduce the amount of insulation fibers you might breathe and to protect yourself if you are sensitive to dust or mold.
- Make sure utilities are turned off or disconnected. Do not enter the area if you smell gas or see downed power lines.
- Make a record of damage and losses—take pictures or make video recordings.
- Prevent further damage as much as possible and secure items from theft. If your roof has been exposed and the house is still standing, cover the roof to prevent water damage that may occur later.
- Contact your insurance agent or company representative.
- Assemble cleaning supplies and equipment:
 - Buckets
 - Tools (crowbar, hammer, screwdriver)
 - Brooms
 - Shovels
 - Hoes
 - Scoops
 - Wheelbarrow
 - Dolly
 - Bushel baskets
 - Throw-away containers for garbage and containers to carry from house to street
 - Sponge mop or mop that is easily squeezed out
 - Water hose
 - Washtubs for soaking objects
 - Low-suds detergents
 - Bleaches
 - Disinfectants
 - Ammonia
 - Scouring powder
 - Rubber gloves
- Salvage valuable items first, including the following:
 - Personal identification: birth certificates, driver's licenses, social security cards, marriage licenses, birth and death certificates
 - Insurance information (life, home, car)
 - Medical/medication information, including eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other items
 - Financial records, such as mortgage papers, property deeds, legal contracts, wills, bank account and credit card information, and utility bills
 - Valuables, such as jewelry, cash, and photos
- Discard items that cannot be salvaged.
- Use caution when handling clothing, linens, and other textiles contaminated with fiberglass fibers.
 - Wash items in a bathtub so the fibers go down the drain. Wear rubber gloves to keep the fibers from getting into your fingers.
 - Or put washable items in a washing machine. Be sure to rinse the drum thoroughly to remove fibers.
 - Dry-clean items that would be damaged by water. Alert the dry cleaner that fiberglass is present.
 - Vacuum items to help remove fiberglass fibers.
- Keep detailed records of extra expenses and business activity during the recovery.