

# Sheltering in a Tornado Event

The City does not have public storm shelters because while they may seem like a good idea, they often come with more risks than benefits to residents including:

- Opening public buildings as storm shelters gives a false sense of security and offers no more protection than a well-built residential structure.
- Traveling to a public storm shelter could put you at greater risk than if you sheltered in place. Traffic is likely to get congested if everyone is heading toward one location. Your vehicle is one of the most dangerous places to be during a tornado.
- Tornadoes can happen at night. If a storm wakes you at 2 a.m. you likely won't have enough time to gather your family, load them into a car and drive to a storm shelter. Sheltering in place affords you the quickest and best protection for a short notice event.
- The City has not built public storm shelters because it would be impossible to shelter even a small percentage of the population. If we were to do this, we would then be required to build enough shelters to hold more than 23,000 residents.

We encourage all of our citizens to maintain situational awareness during severe weather events and be prepared to shelter in place if necessary. Here are basic tornado safety tips that will help you find the most ideal location to shelter during a storm.

## **Basic Tornado Safety**

- The lowest possible level of a building or structure (Ex: First floor, basement, storm cellar)
- Interior room with no windows, such as a closet or bathroom
- Get underneath sturdy piece of furniture and cover neck and head
- Avoid places / rooms with wide-span roofs (cafeterias, gymnasiums, shopping malls)
- Mobile Homes are not safe shelters; you should make plans before the storm arrives to get to a pre-planned shelter
- Apartment dwellers should have a plan in place to get to an apartment on the lowest level of the complex. Contact your Leasing Office.
- Do not attempt to outrun a tornado in your automobile, seek shelter inside a nearby building. Be sure not to choose a large box store with a wide-span roof.
- If stranded outside lie down in a ditch or low lying area away from the vehicle, but remain aware of possible flash flooding
- Do not seek shelter underneath a bridge or overpass