



## Preparing for Storm Season

With the beginning of spring also comes the arrival of tornado and storm season in Oklahoma. And in some areas of our state, we have already seen the destruction caused by tornadoes. While Oklahomans are no strangers to severe weather, it is no less imperative to be ready and know what to do when weather conditions begin to escalate.

First, it is important to be aware of the weather conditions around you or when your area might be subject to severe weather. Keep an eye on the news and follow directions from the National Weather Service to be up to date with any severe storm warnings. To receive real time alerts from the National Weather Service, safety tips and help finding safety shelters and disaster recovery centers, download the mobile app available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at [fema.gov/mobile-app](https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app). You can also contact your local county commissioner or mayor to find public storm shelters in your area.

Additionally, if you or a loved one are deaf or hard-of-hearing, there are unique alerts available through the Oklahoma Weather Alert Remote Notification (OK-WARN). This service provides notifications of weather hazards and emergencies to Oklahomans via pager, e-mail or cell phone. To sign up for these life-saving alerts, visit the following:

[oklahoma.gov/oem/programs-and-services/ok-warn.html](https://oklahoma.gov/oem/programs-and-services/ok-warn.html).

Next, have a severe weather kit on hand that can help ensure you stay safe if a storm hits. Emergency kits should always contain a flashlight, water, a whistle, a first aid kit and batteries. For more resources and helpful tips in building your emergency kit, please visit [Ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit). You should also have a clear and concise plan that is easy to follow for your household in the event of an emergency. An emergency plan should include where to shelter, an evacuation route, how to communicate with those inside your household, how you will receive emergency alerts and warnings and much more. For guidance in making your plan, visit [Ready.gov/plan](https://www.ready.gov/plan).

To assure you are prepared on all fronts, ask your place of employment to go over its emergency preparedness plan for severe weather. You can also find resources at

[Ready.gov/kids](https://www.ready.gov/kids) to help ensure your children, their educators or others responsible for their safety have a plan and know what to do before, during and after inclement weather.

If disaster does strike and your home is without power, know what is safe to use inside your home for backup energy and heating sources. When some sources are used inappropriately, you can be exposed to toxic carbon monoxide. Be careful that you are using portable generators and combustion or gas-burning appliances as intended and not inside your home or business. Review the following information from the Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) to ensure you are not breathing in toxic fumes: [epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/emergencies-and-iaq#safely](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/emergencies-and-iaq#safely).

Finally, if your property suffers damage from severe weather, reporting damage is vital so our state can accurately understand the full extent of damage a storm causes. If you had damage to your property during recent storms, or if you have damage caused by future storms, you can report it at [damage.ok.gov](https://www.damage.ok.gov).

Our past experiences serve as a sobering reminder that we must be ready at a moment's notice to face tornadoes and other unpredictable weather patterns. The best way to ensure safety for ourselves, our families and loved ones is to be prepared. As severe weather season continues across our state in the days and weeks ahead, please take all the necessary steps to prepare and stay safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "C".

Tom Cole  
Member of Congress