



## Statewide Tornado Drill

*Annual event is set for March 20 at 9:45 a.m.*

Last year, 51 tornadoes hit Virginia, the second highest number on record. To encourage tornado awareness and safety, Governor Bob McDonnell has proclaimed March 20 as Tornado Preparedness Day in the Commonwealth.

On March 20, businesses and organizations, schools and colleges, and families and individuals are encouraged to practice taking cover from tornadoes by participating in the Statewide Tornado Drill, set for 9:45 a.m. At that time, the National Weather Service will send a test tornado warning that will trigger a tone alert and broadcast message on NOAA Weather Radio. The message will be picked up by TV and radio broadcasters, simulating what listeners will hear during an actual tornado warning.

When the test tornado warning is sounded, people should move as quickly as possible to a safe area in their building. Safe areas are basements and crawl spaces, as well as interior rooms, bathrooms, closets or hallways on the lowest level of a building. In choosing a safe area, stay away from windows. Once in the safe area, crouch down or sit on the floor, facing down, and cover heads with hands.

If an actual tornado warning is issued for your area, the fastest way to get that information is by a NOAA Weather Radio, which broadcasts directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. When a tornado warning is issued, the weather radio sounds an alarm followed by information on where the storm is, which way it's moving, and telling people in its path to take cover. NOAA Weather Radios with SAME alerts are available at electronics and sporting goods stores, discount and department stores, and online. Some have strobe lights for the hearing impaired. They come in battery-powered models, and many also have AM/FM bands.

For help in conducting a tornado drill and to register for the statewide drill, go to [www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov). Although registration is not required for the statewide drill, people are encouraged to sign up to show their support. The annual drill is a joint effort of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service.

[View the Governor's proclamation for Tornado Preparedness Day.](#)

