



## Conducting Tornado Drills

**Pre-drill activities:** Each program's Emergency Management Group will review all steps and document a plan on the "Location Specific Emergency Plan Summary." Be sure to distribute this summary to new staff upon Orientation and for current staff annually. You may conduct verbal drills during staff meetings, then have actual drills after staff have been trained on the procedures.

- ✓ Select location in building to be use for shelter for each section of the building. It is recommended that people be able to get to the selected area within 3 minutes of the tornado sighting. Look for interior hallways on the lowest level possible.
- ✓ Do not use large gymnasiums, auditoriums or other rooms with wide freespan roofs.
- ✓ Never use elevators.
- ✓ Do not use rooms with windows. Get under heavy pieces of furniture.
- ✓ Identify methods of communication if there is no electricity
- ✓ Identify staff person(s) who will monitor the radio during a Tornado Watch.
- ✓ Identify staff who will monitor the sky for tornado sightings during a Watch
- ✓ As soon as a Warning is issued, proceed to the designated area.
- ✓ Teach people the Safety Position (illustrated below)
- ✓ Be sure there are adequate flashlights available for checking for injuries and damage after the drill

### Procedure for drill / real thing:

- ✓ AS SOON AS A WARNING IS DECLARED OR STAFF SEES A TORNADO, identified staff sounds an alarm.
- ✓ Staff ensure that all clients are directed / escorted to the designated area
- ✓ Staff who have easy access to flashlights should take them on their way to the designated area. Or permanently store flashlights in the designated areas. NEVER USE CANDLES OR LIGHTERS.
- ✓ Once in the designated area, as much as possible against a wall, or under heavy furniture, assume the protective position. It is NOT recommended that people in wheelchairs are removed from their chairs, but bend over safely and put hands over head.



- ✓ Once tornado has passed, select one or two people to carefully inspect the building for downed power lines and other hazards, and injuries.
- ✓ At least one staff member must stay in the designated area with clients until the All Clear is given.
- ✓ Call Emergency help

Anyone caught outside should not attempt to run to the building unless he/she is absolutely sure to arrive before the tornado strikes. Instead, the person should take shelter by assuming the protective position on the ground in a depressed area (ditch with no water) if possible.

If a tornado appears so quickly that the above action cannot be followed, all occupants should seek cover at once. For those inside the building, heavy furniture provides good protection.

After the drill, have key staff assemble to discuss the drill and modify plan as needed. Some things to consider:

- ✓ Do more safe areas need to be identified?
- ✓ Are some safe areas cluttered and need to be cleaned out to be more accessible?
- ✓ Do employees know the fastest routes to take to safe areas?
- ✓ Did communication system function as needed?
- ✓ Were there adequate flashlights available?