

Tornadoes & Severe Storms

A practical guide to help hospitality teams prepare for, respond to, and recover from tornadoes and severe weather events.



PREPARE Before the Event

- Create your plan
- Train your team
- Share Process with Owners
- Inspect systems
- Verify insurance coverage



RESPOND During the Event

- Activate your written plan
- Communicate with guests and owners
- Coordinate local contacts
- Document in real time



RECOVER After the Event

- Support your teams
- Assess all properties
- Send owner damage report
- File Business Interruption Ins.
- Update your written plan

WHY THIS MATTERS



Nashville is one of the country's strongest leisure markets, with 16.9 million daily and overnight visitors in 2024. After the December 2023 tornadoes, Nashville's official recovery page reported 861 affected properties total, including 45 destroyed, and noted that local, state, and federal disaster declarations were issued. This was more than a weather event; it became a large-scale disaster recovery operation that impacted a major market.



BEFORE THE EVENT - PREPARE NOW



Update Your Tornado & Severe Storm Response Plan:

Review your written Response Plan annually before peak season. It is important to provide basic tornado safety procedures and shelter locations at each property, as well as guest notification protocols, staff procedures, owner communication cadence, and your generator and supply inventory per property. Date and maintain both a physical copy at the property and a digital copy within your management system.



Build Your Owner Notification Protocol:

When a tornado watch or warning is issued for a county where you have properties, notify all affected property owners within one hour. Your management agreement should specify this cadence. Owners should never learn about a storm impacting their home from the news before hearing from you.



Install Weather Alert Capability at Each Property:

Every property should have either a battery-powered NOAA weather radio or instructions directing guests to enable Wireless Emergency Alerts on their phones. Include this in your property welcome guide. Outdoor tornado sirens are designed for outdoor warning only; guests inside may not hear them.





BEFORE THE EVENT

PREPARE NOW



Map Shelter Locations at Every Property:

Identify and document the interior shelter room(s) at each property, lowest level, away from windows, in an interior room or hallway. Post a visible shelter map and standard tornado safety guide inside each property. For multi-unit properties, post maps at stairwells. This is non-negotiable for every property you manage.



Guest Communication Templates:

Pre-write two guest communications: One for Tornado Watch and one for Tornado Warning. These should be ready to send via your PMS or text system within minutes of an alert. Delays in communication during an active warning can put guests at risk.



Identify Local Emergency Contacts Per Property:

For each property, maintain a list of: (1) who will physically check on the property, (2) the local fire/police non-emergency number, and (3) the county emergency management contact. Make sure you can verify guest safety during an active event.



DURING THE EVENT

RESPOND NOW

1

Tornado Watch & Warning: Know the Difference:

A Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for tornadoes. Send your Watch guest notification & monitor closely. A Tornado Warning is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar. Send your Warning message immediately and attempt direct contact with all guests at affected properties. Do not wait.

2

Attempt Direct Guest Contact Immediately:

Call, text, and email guests at all affected properties the moment a Warning is issued. Your message: "A tornado warning has been issued for your area. Please move to [specific room] immediately and stay away from windows." Keep it short, specific, and actionable.

3

Notify Property Owners:

Send your owners a brief status update as soon as a warning is issued for their property. Example: "A tornado warning is active for [address]. I have notified guests, and they are sheltering. I will update you with a property status report."

4

Wait for Official All-Clear:

Wait until warnings have officially expired or local emergency officials confirm conditions are safe before re-entering. Confirm this with your local authorities, the NOAA weather radio, the FEMA app, or weather.gov.



OWNER COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITY

As the property manager, you are responsible for keeping your owners informed before, during, and after every disaster event, not only when damage has occurred. Maintaining your homeowner contact list with primary phone, secondary phone, and email is essential.



AFTER THE EVENT LEAD YOUR RECOVERY



Property Assessment Before Guest Re-Occupancy:

Conduct or arrange a full walkthrough before allowing guests to return to their properties. Check for: structural damage, broken glass, downed power lines, possible gas leaks, roof damage, and debris. If in doubt about structural integrity, relocate guests and call a licensed contractor.



Owner Damage Report Within 48 Hours:

Provide every affected property owner with a written damage report within 48 hours. Include: photos of all damage, description of current guest status, steps taken to protect the property, your recommended next steps, and any insurance contact recommendation. Owners rely on you to be their eyes.



Guest Communication & Refunds:

Contact all displaced guests directly about their options: full refund, rebooking, or alternative property arrangements. Clear, compassionate communication helps reduce disputes and protects trust.



Staff Welfare & Recovery Check:

Contact every staff member as soon as possible. Log who is safe, who has personal property damage, and who cannot return to work. Connect affected staff with your county's FEMA registration, American Red Cross local services, and any employee assistance program you maintain.



Business Recovery:

File insurance claims promptly. Understand your business interruption coverage. Reach out to your state's Small Business Administration office for disaster loans if needed. The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans for operational losses.



Community Role:

If your property is unaffected, consider becoming a hospitality hub for relief workers or displaced residents. Partner with local emergency management and the Red Cross. Your visible community leadership strengthens trust.



EMERGENCY RESOURCES

QUICK REFERENCE



SEVERE WEATHER TRACKING

Storm Shield

Named as one of the best weather apps. Severe weather alerts for your exact location. Get storm-based alerts for severe weather and other life-threatening weather events via voice and push notifications.

StormShield.com



COMMUNICATION TOOL

Zello Walkie Talkie

Zello is an enterprise-grade communications solution powered by instant live voice push-to-talk communication that provides instant push-to-talk communication.

Zello is free for First Responders

Zello.com



WHEN A TORNADO WARNING IS ISSUED

- ✓ Notify guests immediately
- ✓ Confirm shelter locations
- ✓ Contact local emergency support
- ✓ Update property owners
- ✓ Document all communication



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency 911

Fire Department _____

Poison Control _____

Utility Provider _____

Insurance _____



INSURANCE & FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Contact your insurance provider immediately after the event
- FEMA Disaster Assistance: disasterassistance.gov
- SBA Disaster Loans: sba.gov/disaster



STRONGER TOGETHER

Hospitality Heroes is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to equipping hospitality professionals with the skills, systems, and community connections they need to navigate disasters or crises and recover stronger.

