



# Know Before You Go

## Preparing to Visit a National Forest

### Tornadoes

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornado intensities are classified as F0 (weakest) to F5 (strongest). They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees and hurling objects through the air.

A tornado **watch** is broadcast when conditions are conducive to the development of tornadoes. A tornado **warning** is issued when a tornado has been sighted, indicated on radar, or is occurring in the warning area.



### Safety Checklist

- The biggest danger you'll face if a tornado strikes while you're in the forest is falling trees and tree limbs.
- Visit [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov) for weather updates.

#### If outdoors:

- If possible, get inside a building.
- At a developed campground, the restroom may be the closest option.
- Rock shelters (areas under a cliff line) may offer partial protection from falling tree limbs.
- If shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building.

#### If in a car:

- Never try to outride a tornado in a car or truck. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift up a car or truck and toss it through the air.
- Get out of the car immediately and take shelter in a nearby building.
- Seek shelter under an overpass.
- If there is no time to reach shelter, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle.

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