

# Continuity IQ

from  DSPN

April 2006

## Fast Facts for Our Valued Friends and Clients

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at DSPN. This month's topic is tornadoes. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

## Fast Facts about Tornadoes

### Did you know....

1. According to Gale Encyclopedia of Science, an average of 800 tornadoes strike the United States each year. Tornadoes are responsible for about 80 deaths annually, 1500 injuries, and many millions of dollars in property damage. While it is still impossible to predict exactly when and where tornadoes will strike, progress has been made in predicting tornado development and detecting tornadoes with Doppler radar.
2. Although spring brings favorable tornado conditions, they can occur any time of the year, day or night.
3. Tornadoes are commonly associated with the nation's heartland – in a 10-state area stretching from Texas to Nebraska that also includes Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Arkansas, known as Tornado Alley. Yet tornadoes have occurred in all 50 U.S. states.
4. The exact mechanism of tornado formation inside severe thunderstorms is still a matter of dispute but it appears that tornadoes grow in a similar fashion to the small vortices that form in draining bathtubs. When the plug is pulled in a bathtub, water from other parts of the tub rushes in to replace that going down the drain. If the water has any swirl in it, the drain soon has a little vortex.
5. Tornadoes move with the thunderstorm that they are attached to, traveling at average speeds of about 10-30 mph, although some tornadoes have been seen to stand still, while other tornadoes have been clocked at 60 mph. Since a typical tornado has a lifetime of about 5-10 minutes, it may stay for only a few miles, although some tornadoes have cut a path of destruction for over 200 miles.
6. During the past 21 years, the United States has sustained 48 extreme weather events, each with damage estimates exceeding \$1 billion. Of these disasters, 41 occurred in the last 12 years and accounted for \$180 billion.
7. A tornado rated F1 is considered relatively weak with winds of 73 to 112 mph. Yet a tornado of this magnitude has the power to peel off surface roofs and overturn mobile homes. A tornado rated F2 can push over box cars and uproot large trees.
8. Here are some criteria for selecting the best tornado shelter in a building: Go

to the basement or the lowest level of the building. If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or a smaller inner room. Get away from the windows and go to the center of the room. Debris can sometimes come through walls. Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways, or shopping malls.

9. Tornado mitigation options: Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs. Then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Install permanent shutters on windows and add protection to the outside areas of sliding glass doors. Move or secure lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants and anything else that can be picked up by wind and become a projectile.
10. Knowing what to do after a tornado strikes makes the recovery effort easier, quicker and safer. Common hazards during the aftermath include downed power lines, gas leaks, and loose debris that could fall.

## Brain Teasers

### True or False:

1. The Fujita Scale predicts the destructive power of a tornado.
2. Despite what you might have heard, highway overpasses are death traps, not good shelters, in a tornado.
3. Because an automobile is heavy and has shatter-proof glass, it is a recommended tornado shelter.
4. When the National Weather Service issues a "Tornado Warning", it means that atmospheric conditions are favorable for severe thunderstorms that can produce tornadoes.
5. Tornadoes are more common in Florida than Oklahoma.

## Check your answers here...

### Answers to the above questions:

1. False. The Fujita Scale does indeed measure the destructive power of a tornado, but unlike hurricane rating systems, it does not predict anything. Rather, the measurements are based on actual damages the tornado has caused.
2. True. National Weather Service meteorologist Dan Miller explains: "We routinely tell people to get down, cover up, and get as many things as possible between them and the tornado. When they get up under an overpass, they're doing the opposite of that." In effect, the area under and overpass amounts to a wind tunnel that speeds up the wind, and any debris it is carrying. Miller stresses that it is not the wind that is the threat, rather it is what is carried by the wind.
3. False. If you are in a vehicle when a tornado approaches, the National Weather Service recommends that you get out immediately. If there is no time to get indoors, you should lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle. Be aware of the potential for flooding.
4. False. A Tornado Warning is more urgent than a Tornado Watch. A Tornado Warning means that a tornado has been spotted on the ground or is indicated by radar. People in the vicinity should take cover immediately!
5. True. But Florida tornadoes are generally weak, with winds around 100 mph. On the other hand, tornadoes that have hit Oklahoma are some of the most

violent on record. The tornado that struck Oklahoma City in 1999 had winds of nearly 320 mph just above the ground.

## Readiness Check

### Hard-to-remember details:

1. If you have facilities in areas where tornadoes are likely to occur, do your plans address actions to take if the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Watch or Tornado Warning?
2. Does your equipment inventory include a Weather Radio?
3. Do you have a designated Tornado Shelter in facilities that are likely to be hit by a tornado?
4. Do your plans describe actions to take during the aftermath of a tornado?
5. Do you have cameras available to photograph damages before the cleanup begins?

## New From DSPN

### Check these out on our website:

1. [DSPN's Free Resources Page](#) has newly-posted preparedness guides for tornado, flood, hurricane, and thunderstorm.
2. [DSPN's workshop focusing on industry standards for business continuity plans](#) will be offered in Atlanta on April 12 and in New York City on April 26.
3. [DSPN's workshop on testing and exercising](#) is receiving rave reviews around the country. It is scheduled for Atlanta on April 13 and for New York City on April 27.

## Contributors to This Issue

- Paul Klier, DSPN

## Comments and Contributions



### Tell us what you think...

Thanks to all of you who have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

**Paul**

**Contact Information**

email: [pklier@dspnetwork.com](mailto:pklier@dspnetwork.com)

**Join our mailing list!**

Join

phone: 800-601-3776  
web: <http://www.dspnetwork.com>