

Chancellor's Memorandum  
CM-64 – Tornado Policy

**To:** Vice Chancellors, Deans, Administrative Staff, and Department Heads.

**From:** LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans Chancellor

July 11, 2017

Revised on September 27, 2017

Revised on March 22, 2018

### I. PURPOSE

To offer guidance to Health Sciences Center faculty, staff, students, patients and visitors for response to tornado threats.

### II. DEFINITION

A Tornado is defined as a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground.

### III. OVERVIEW

The most violent tornadoes are capable of tremendous destruction. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide. While the peak occurrences for severe weather events in the United States happen between March and October, severe weather can occur at any time.

Take steps now to be prepared if a tornado strikes. Learn about the LSU Health New Orleans Emergency Communications System and the LSU Health New Orleans procedures for tornadoes.

#### Be Prepared

- Know where you plan to go if you get a warning.
- Practice a "tornado drill" at least once a year.
- Use the buddy system to check in after an incident to keep others from worrying and have a pre-determined place to meet after an incident occurs.
- Make your friends and family aware of the potential for tornadoes in the area.
- Get informed about upcoming severe weather and stay alert for severe weather

#### Watches and Warnings:

In order to save lives, branches of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issue public watches and warnings.

Knowing the difference between the two can prepare individuals for the necessary steps to take when considering the threat of severe weather. Watches and warnings issued to the public are based on different criteria.

Tornado Watch: Be Prepared! Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives! Watches are issued by the Storm Prediction Center for parishes where

tornadoes may occur. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous parishes or even states.

**Tornado Warning: Take Action!** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Warnings are issued by the local National Weather Service (NWS) forecast office. Warnings typically encompass a much smaller area (around the size of a city or small parish) that may be impacted by a tornado identified by a forecaster on radar or by a trained spotter/law enforcement watching the storm.

Our mid and high rise facilities are designed not to collapse under wind loads, but building windows, cladding and roofs can incur damage. The main hazard from a tornado is broken glass from a window or flying debris entering through a window.

Studies have shown that a high percentage of personnel often ignore tornado warnings since they don't see the threat right at their doorsteps. Accordingly, leadership should engage as necessary to ensure personnel move to safety.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure our campuses remain safe - we utilize a company, AccuWeather Skyguard, to specifically look at our New Orleans campus area (Downtown and Dental School only).

What this means for you is that even though the NWS has issued a tornado watch or warning, it may not be applicable to our campus - if you shelter during National Weather Service warnings, that is just fine. However, you will not receive an e2Campus warning, as sheltering for our campus is only required when AccuWeather determines that a tornado may affect our campus. Other LSU Health New Orleans campuses and rotation sites should shelter on all NWS warnings.

You will be notified of a Tornado Watch when issued by the NWS. This is to make you aware that a tornado may develop in the area covered by the Watch.

When our campuses are at risk, you will be notified of a tornado warning issued by AccuWeather Skyguard via the campus emergency communications system (i.e. e2Campus Text Alerts, emails, digital signs, homepage banners, etc.). NWS issues warnings for the entire parish -- AccuWeather looks at our specific LSU Health New Orleans downtown and Dental campuses. For other locations, refer to NWS warnings.

#### V. PROCEDURES

##### A. What to do during a Tornado Warning:

- When you receive our Tornado Warning alert, immediately move to a refuge area on a lower floor away from windows in the central part of the building. Stairwells are also an ideal refuge area as they are constructed with reinforced concrete, however avoid the stairwells that have glass, currently at the HDC and the exterior stairwell at the Lions Eye Center Building at 2020 Gravier Street, as well as all stairwells at the CEB (1542 Tulane Avenue) EXCEPT for stairwell 5. See Appendix A for recommended refuge areas.
- Move out of buildings at the School of Dentistry (Interprofessional Primary Care Clinic, warehouse, and Facility Services warehouse, shops and powerhouse) that do not provide the same level of structural protection as our mid and high rise buildings and into the main buildings on the Dental School campus.
- Avoid first floor lobbies with glass doors and windows, and be aware that broken glass from atriums could impact lower floors (e. g., Resource Center and Human Development Center).
- Do not use elevators during a tornado warning.
- Close doors to offices, labs and classrooms that have windows to protect against flying debris. Close all other doors, including main corridors, making sure they latch.
- If possible, get under something sturdy.
- Share notification with others and assist anyone with disabilities, if possible.
- Stay indoors until the threat has passed. You will receive an all-clear message or notification from University

Police or another authorized source. Even when a specific storm cell has passed beyond the area, conditions may still be right for high winds, lightning, and other hazardous weather conditions.

- Follow instructions from all LSU Health New Orleans emergency communications.

B. If you are caught outdoors and receive a text alert or email that a tornado may be approaching campus:

- If in a vehicle or outside, immediately seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- Never try to outrun a tornado. If you cannot seek shelter in a building, lie in a ditch or low-lying area and cover your head and neck.
- Do not call 911 unless you require immediate emergency assistance.

C. If someone is injured or there is damage caused by the weather, notify LSU Health New Orleans University Police:

1. Notify LSU Health New Orleans University Police of the location and nature of injury or damage.
2. Exit a building that smells of natural gas or chemical fumes.
3. Do not tour damaged areas.
4. Do not go into damaged buildings.
5. Use the telephone only to report emergencies.
6. Assist special needs persons.

To reach LSU Health New Orleans University Police in an emergency:

- Call 504-568-8999.
- Send a u-Tip alert text alert to 50911 and begin your message with LSUHSC followed by a space.
- Through the [LSU Shield app](#).

## **APPENDIX A -- Tornado Refuge Areas**

### Stanislaus Hall

Stairwells on lower floors.

### Clinical Education Building (1542 Tulane)

Stairwell 5 on lower floors. Avoid Stairwells 4, 3, and 1 as they have windows.  
First floor auditorium and restrooms.

### Residence Hall

Stairwells on lower floors.

### Resource Center Building

Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.  
First and second floor rooms without windows.

### Human Development Center

First floor auditorium and restrooms.  
Classroom 101.  
Avoid the stairwells as they have windows.

### Medical Education Building

Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.  
Lecture rooms A and B

### Mervin L. Trail Clinical Sciences Research Building

Stairwells on lower floors.  
3rd and 4th floor hallways and interior offices.

### Lions Eye Center

Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.  
2nd and 3rd floor hallways and interior offices. Avoid the lobbies on these floors as they have exposure to windows.  
Avoid the exterior stairwell as it has exposure to windows.

### Allied Health / Nursing Building

Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.  
Auditoriums A, B and C.  
2nd floor elevator lobby.

### School of Dentistry Advanced Clinical Care and Clinical Research Building

Stairwells on first and second floors  
2nd floor interior hallways and rooms with no exposure to windows

### School of Dentistry Clinic Building

Stairwells on lower floors  
Interior hallways and offices, elevator lobbies and waiting rooms on 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors. Ensure all hallway doors are closed and secured.  
5th floor interior hallways and rooms with no exposure to windows

School of Dentistry Admin Building

Stairwells on lower floors

2nd floor interior offices and hallways with no exposure to windows

3rd floor interior offices

Seton Building

Stairwells and restrooms on lower floors.