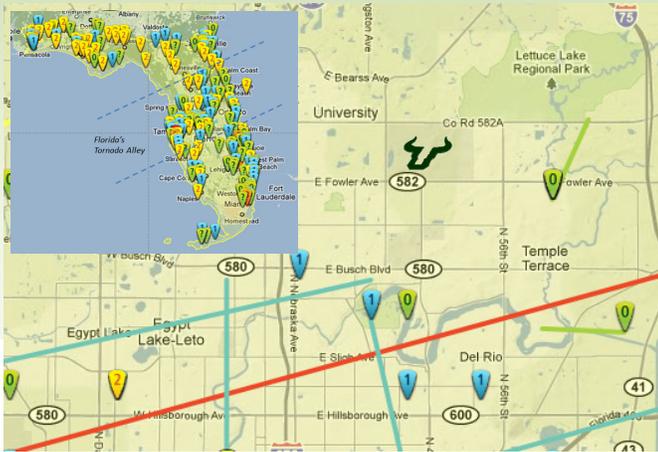


Tornadoes

Although Florida has never witnessed the extreme effects of nature's most destructive tornado, an EF-5, it has certainly experienced its fair share of tornado activity. In 2011, the Tampa Bay region, poised in the middle of Florida's "Tornado Alley," witnessed nearly a year ago the dramatic and powerful effects of these cyclonic storms as nine tornadoes ripped through Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Polk counties on March 31, 2011. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured, and the damage caused by the tornadoes was relatively minimal.



Historical tornado incidents in Florida and near the University of South Florida Tampa campus



Tampa Bay area tornado, March 31, 2011

Here are some tips to help ensure your safety during the 2012 Tornado season:

- ❖ **Monitor the weather daily.** During the winter tornado season (December-April), tornadoes form when strong trailing squall lines rush across Florida. February and March mark the height of Florida's winter tornado season when stronger cold fronts interact with warmer air over Florida.
- ❖ **Be prepared for sudden and extreme situations.** Florida's tornado climatology suggests that "strong to violent tornadoes are just as likely to occur after midnight as they are in the afternoon." But because most people are asleep after midnight, these tornadoes are typically more deadly. Your best preparedness measure is to have a **NOAA Weather Radio** in close proximity to where you sleep. The weather radio will alert you when extreme weather conditions exist and provide you with the immediate actions to take to remain safe.
- ❖ **If a tornado warning has been issued for your area and you are inside:**
Go to the lowest building level. Go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.
- ❖ **If you are in a vehicle, trailer, or modular building/structure:**
Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building. Modular buildings, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. If you cannot get out or no other building is nearby, lie flat and cover your head to protect yourself from flying debris. Never exit a building during extreme weather conditions. Lightning strikes are highly during these events.
- ❖ **If you are outside with no shelter:**
Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your arms. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Never try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle. Instead, leave the vehicle for safer shelter.
- ❖ **If a tornado warning sounds and class is in session:**
Faculty and students occupying classrooms with exterior windows should evacuate the room and seek shelter in interior rooms without windows or in hallways and corridors. Tornado warnings are brief and normally last 10-15 minutes. Provided the campus has not been affected, class can resume once the tornado warning has ended and the "All Clear" is issued. Only the President and Provost have the authority to cancel classes.
- ❖ **Assisting Evacuees:**
Always be mindful of other individuals who may need assistance in evacuating and finding shelter. If you cannot render assistance, contact University Police at 911, and provide the location of the individual in need of assistance.

