

Secondary Severe Weather Season

November and December

The secondary severe weather season typically affects north and central Alabama during November and early December. Several deadly tornadoes have devastated Alabama communities during this secondary severe weather season over the past few years. In fact, significant tornado outbreaks have occurred in 2000, 2001, and 2002. The National Weather Service in conjunction with Shelby County Emergency Management Agency and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency will observe "**Severe Weather Awareness Day**" on October 28 to try to focus attention on our secondary season.

Alabama and the other southeastern states are the only locations in the United States that experience a distinct secondary severe weather season. Tornado statistics since 1950 clearly show that the southeast is unique in the world with two severe weather seasons.

Everyone in West Alabama should remember December 16, 2000. On that day, an F-4 tornado struck the south central portion of Tuscaloosa County. The deadly twister killed 11 and injured over 180. The storm raked an 18 miles long path across the county leaving millions of dollars in damage behind. It is the largest and most devastating tornado ever recorded in Alabama during the secondary tornado season.



The National Weather Service (NWS) and Shelby County EMA urges everyone to understand the meaning of a watch and warning. Knowing the difference could save your life:

Tornado Watch- issued by the NWS for a large area when conditions are favorable for tornado development;

Tornado Warning- issued by the NWS for one or more counties when radar detects a tornado or a tornado has been spotted.

Do you know what to do at home, at work, in your car? Can you receive weather information especially warnings in all of these locations? Here are some important safety rules to follow when tornadoes occur:

- Go to the lowest floor of the structure;
- Put as many walls between yourself and the outside as possible;
- Stay away from all windows;
- Protect yourself from flying debris.

Powerful technology and early warnings cannot save lives unless people are prepared, stay informed, and know how to react to severe weather. Alabama is in an active weather region, so the question is not if we will have more devastating tornadoes, but when?

If you have further questions about the Secondary Tornado Season in Alabama contact Shelby County EMA at (205) 669-3999.

Check out tornado preparedness information links elsewhere on this website.