



News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Altus Public Storm Shelter Statement

(ALTUS, OKLAHOMA): **The City of Altus would like to remind you that we do not maintain public storm shelters.**

What are the alternatives? Constructing a personal storm shelter is the best option, but if that is not possible then develop your plan today and stay informed of conditions. Although some jurisdictions provide public shelter, emergency management professionals and experts in the field of severe weather strongly recommend only one solution: personal pre-planning for severe weather events.

Develop a plan and practice it regularly with all family members.

The plan should include the identification of an appropriate shelter site, and a system to communicate with family members.

Where to shelter? Residential safe rooms or personal storm shelters provide the best protection from tornadoes or high wind events. If underground shelter is not available it is still a better option to "shelter in place." Standard residential housing typically provides survivable shelter for 95% of the tornadoes experienced in Oklahoma. Simply remember the basics; Get in, Get down, Cover up. Translated this means go to the lowest level possible, put as many walls as you can between yourself the outdoors, and protect your head and body from injuries using blankets, pillows, coats; anything that will provide padding. The only exception to this suggestion is manufactured housing. Individuals living in manufactured housing or mobile homes should ALWAYS seek shelter elsewhere. Neighbors may have a safe shelter. Therefore, area residents are encouraged to "know your neighbor" both to provide and receive help during times of emergency.

Travel during severe weather? Travel puts the individual at more risk than he would be exposed to if sheltering in place. The risk of injury or death during severe weather is ten times greater when vehicles are involved. Travel can involve other obstacles as well. Debris blocked roadways and traffic jams are common problems. People will leave their vehicles anywhere when in a hurry to reach shelter. Just walking to your car can put your life in danger from flying debris, hail or lightning. Vehicles and mobile homes are NEVER safe in severe weather and the last place you want to be.

Awareness is vital! If you live in Oklahoma you know that severe weather is a real threat. There are numerous systems that can ensure your awareness, including all-hazard or weather radios, free notification programs for your computer or phone and local broadcast media. The City of Altus Alert system is available at the City website <http://www.altusok.gov/194/Citizen-Notification-System> where, after subscribing, one can enroll for text and email weather alerts.

Have a shelter already? Area residents who have safe shelters are encouraged to register with their local fire department. Should debris cover the opening to the shelter, rescue is initially focused on those who have registered. Storm shelters can be registered here: <http://altusok.gov/stormshelter>

Interested in having a shelter built? The City of Altus does not currently have a FEMA rebate program for individual safe rooms. However, the State's "Sooner Safe - Safe Room Rebate Program" <http://bit.ly/1nxutEY> is available to Altus residents.

For more information, or questions please visit <http://www.altusok.gov/158/Emergency-Management> or contact Altus Emergency Management Director, Lloyd Colston at (580) 481-2260 or lcolston@altusok.gov.

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