

## OU-NORMAN CAMPUS: TORNADO REFUGE PROTOCOL

### OU Norman Campus Students, Staff, and Faculty:

Research strongly indicates that the safest place of refuge when tornadoes threaten is in an interior room at home. However, given the large number of students living on campus, the University of Oklahoma will take as many precautions as possible to provide severe weather refuge areas for on-campus students in classes and residence halls, as well as for staff and faculty at work when tornadoes threaten. Those working, taking classes, and living on campus should familiarize themselves with the location of each building's [severe weather refuge areas](#) in advance of a severe weather threat.

### Important Tornado Terminology: Watch vs. Warning

- **Tornado Watch = Be Prepared.** A Tornado Watch is used to notify you to pay attention to the possibility of tornadoes during the next several hours.
  - When a Tornado Watch is issued by the NOAA Storm Prediction Center, on-campus residence hall refuge areas at Couch, Walker, Kraettli, Cross Village, Traditions East and Traditions West will be activated for access using a valid OU student ID.
  - If a watch is issued, stay up-to-date with the weather situation in your area. Weather information for the OU Norman Campus is available from the [OU Department of Campus Safety](#) as well as the OU Campus Safety Twitter feed [@OUEmergencyPrep](#).
  - In addition, make sure that your mobile contact phone number at [ecs.ou.edu](#) is accurate to receive important OU RAVE Alerts.
- **Tornado Warning = Take Action.** A Tornado Warning means that a tornado is imminent and quick action is necessary.
  - An OU RAVE Tornado Warning (OUAlert) text message will be sent if a tornado is expected to threaten the Norman campus.
  - Do not leave the building you are in. Proceed immediately to the appropriate [severe weather refuge area](#) inside the building you are in. The most dangerous location when a tornado threatens is outside. Stay indoors!
  - Note: There may be occasions in which the City of Norman activates its outdoor warning sirens but an OU RAVE (OUAlert) text message is not sent, as the city's outdoor warning sirens cover a large geographic area that stretches miles away from campus. In these instances, make sure you are closely monitoring local weather reports.

### If You Do Not Live On Campus, Prepare to Seek Refuge at Home.

If you do not live on campus, seek refuge at home unless you are already on campus when the warning is issued. OU Norman Campus buildings are not public storm shelters, as room is only available for on-campus students, staff, and faculty. Do not leave your home to respond to campus.

**Before Severe Weather Hits, Make a Plan:** Tornadoes in Oklahoma can occur during any time of year. Create a plan and prepare your home environment for a tornado threat.

- Identify safe refuge-in-home options utilizing the "get in - get down - cover up" strategy. Specifically, select an interior room away from doors and windows on the lowest level of your residence and prepare to use a bicycle helmet, pillows and blankets to protect yourself from possible debris.

### If You Are On Campus During a Tornado Warning:

- **Place of Refuge Protocol During the Class/Work Day**
  - If a Tornado Warning is issued during business hours, all on-campus students, staff, and faculty should take refuge in the severe weather refuge areas of the building you are in. Those working, taking classes, and living on campus should familiarize themselves with the location of each building's severe weather refuge areas in advance of a severe weather threat. Maps are available in each building, and the locations are also listed [here](#).
  - Students in on-campus housing when the tornado warning is issued should use their appropriate residence hall refuge areas at Couch, Walker, Kraettli, Traditions East, Traditions West, Cross Village, McAsland Hall, the appropriate stairwells at David L. Boren Hall and Headington Hall, and the basements at Headington College and Dunham College. Many of these areas are controlled access, meaning that you must swipe your OU student ID to enter the place of refuge.

- **Place of Refuge Protocol | After Hours and Weekends**

- **Students Living in On-Campus Housing**

All residence hall refuge areas will be activated in advance of a tornado threat (i.e., when a Tornado Watch is issued). When a Tornado Warning is issued, proceed immediately to these refuge areas (Couch, Walker, Kraettli, Traditions East, Traditions West, Cross Village, the appropriate stairwells at David L. Boren Hall and Headington Hall, and the basements at Headington College and Dunham College). Many of these areas are controlled access, meaning that you must swipe your OU student ID to enter the refuge area.

- **Students Living in Greek-Affiliated Chapter Housing**

Chapter facilities each have an in-house severe weather refuge area (i.e., basement, interior hallway, interior rooms/restrooms/closets, laundry rooms).

- **Students Living in Off-Campus Housing**

Identify safe refuge-in-home options utilizing the "get in - get down - cover up" strategy. Specifically, select an interior room away from doors and windows on the lowest level of your residence and prepare to use a bicycle helmet, pillows and blankets to protect yourself from possible debris. **Have a Plan!**

- **Do not leave your home to respond to campus.** OU buildings are typically in use by students, staff and faculty for extended hours each day. If a tornado threat occurs and you have historically used an OU building as your primary tornado refuge, prepare now to seek safe refuge at home. Campus locations such as the Oklahoma Memorial Union, Gaylord Family - Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, Lloyd Noble Center, etc. will not be open for the purposes of seeking refuge.

**Have Multiple Ways of Receiving Weather Information.**

- At least one method should work without electric power and without a cellular or Wi-Fi signal, such as a battery-operated weather radio.
- Never rely solely on outdoor warning sirens. The sirens are operated by the City of Norman and can only usually be heard if you are outdoors.
- Stay informed of the latest Norman campus weather forecasts from reliable sources including the [OU Department of Campus Safety](#), the National Weather Service, local media, and university communications. If you use social media, make sure you are following OU Campus Safety on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

**Verify Your OU Emergency Contact Information for OU RAVE Alerts (OUAlert).**

Emergency contact information currently on record for all OU students, faculty, and staff has been preloaded into RAVE. To update or to verify your emergency contact information, visit [ecs.ou.edu](https://ecs.ou.edu).