**Title of article:** It's tornado season!

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**Twisters Strike!**

What causes a tornado? Most tornadoes start as thunderstorms. Air rises from the ground to the storm clouds. Sometimes that rising air starts to spin. A funnel-shaped cloud can form.

The bottom of the funnel-shaped cloud can touch the ground and travel over it. A moving tornado can destroy trees, buildings, and other objects on the ground.

Luckily, scientists can usually predict, or make a good guess about, when and where a tornado will happen. Scientists can then tell people who live in that area to get to safety.

**Funnel Facts:**

* The worst tornadoes have wind speeds of up to 300 miles per hour!
* About 800 tornadoes happen in the United States each year.
* More tornadoes happen in Texas than in any other state.

**Tornado Season**

Tornadoes can occur almost anywhere at any time of the year. However, some regions of the United States experience tornado seasons.

\* Peak tornado season in the northern states is during the summer months. That's because warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico moves farther north during that time.

\* Peak tornado season in the southern states is March through May. During those months, warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico mixes with cooler winds that move south.

\* The southern and central states experience what is known as a second tornado season between October and November.

**Tornado Clues**

Besides hearing about watches and warnings from the National Weather Service (NWS), people can see or hear some environmental clues that can alert them to tornadoes.

\* Dark, often greenish sky

\* A thick wall of clouds

\* Large hail

\* A loud, roaring sound, similar to that of a freight train

**Tornado Safety**

According to the NWS, if a tornado warning is issued in your area or if threatening weather approaches, you should do the following:

\* Get underground or inside a building as soon as possible. Move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.

\* Stay away from windows.

\* Get out of automobiles.

\* Abandon mobile homes, even if the houses are tied down. They offer little protection from tornadoes.

**Fujita Wind-Damage Scale**

A scientist named T. Theodore Fujita created the Fujita Scale. The scale is used to assess damage caused by tornadoes.

Classi- Wind Damage Examples

fication Speed Level

F0 Less than Light Branches broken off trees,

73 mph billboards damaged

F1 73-112 Moderate Mobile homes overturned,

mph moving autos blown off road

F2 113-157 Considerable Large trees snapped or uprooted,

mph cars lifted off ground

F3 158-206 Severe Trains overturned, heavy cars

mph lifted off ground and thrown

F4 207-260 Devastating Well-constructed houses leveled,

mph cars thrown

F5 261-318 Incredible Trees debarked, incredible

mph phenomena