

### Tornado Facts

- Tornadoes can occur at any time of the year.
- In the southern states, peak tornado season is March through May. In the north, peak season is summer.
- In Kentucky, a second tornado season occurs in the fall.
- Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 3 and 9 p.m.
- Most tornadoes move from southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.
- On average, tornadoes move about 30 mph.



### 'Tis the Season... Tornadoes in Kentucky

According to the National Weather Service, over 800 tornadoes occur in the United States each year. Kentucky averages nine tornadoes a year, most between March and May.

#### The Super Tornado Outbreak of 1974

*We know it's serious; it happened here.*

The super tornado outbreak of April 3-4, 1974 was the worst outbreak in U.S. history. One hundred and forty-eight twisters touched down in 16 hours, killing 330 people and injuring 5,484. The path of destruction stretched more than 2,500 miles through 13 states—Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, **Kentucky**, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

"Deadly storms such as the 1974 super outbreak can and will happen again," said Ken Haydu, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service's forecast office in Wilmington, Ohio.

UK Hospital leaders understand the risk that a tornado poses. In fact, the Emergency Management committee ranked tornadoes #4 in a prioritized list of potential emergencies. The high ranking reflects the probability that a tornado will occur and the impact that it could have on the hospital.

Emergency planners understand that the only way to reduce the risk associated with a tornado is to plan, teach, and practice. At the University of Kentucky Hospital, we try to do just that.

- UK police officers are trained as tornado spotters, and the police dispatcher monitors a weather radio at all times.
- UK Hospital has a code to notify employees. When a tornado warning is issued for Fayette County or a tornado is spotted near the campus, the police dispatcher notifies the paging operator to issue a *Yellow Sky* code for the Hospital.
- The Hospital has identified severe weather shelters throughout hospital buildings. These shelters are marked with a green sign.
- The Hospital has a tornado response plan that requires employees to move patients, visitors, and themselves to an interior space or a severe weather shelter when a *Yellow Sky* page is issued.
- The Hospital conducts several drills each year.

### Community-wide Tornado Drill

March 8, 2005

Prepare your employees to respond when they hear the *Yellow Sky* announcement.

Evaluate the drill in your area. Evaluation form is attached.

## Fire Extinguisher Classes

- March 22  
9-10:30 a.m.  
2:30-4 p.m.
- April 7  
7:30-9 a.m.  
1-2:30 p.m.
- May 13  
9-10:30 a.m.  
1-2:30 p.m.
- June 7  
8-9:30 a.m.  
3-4:30 p.m.

Send an email to [sqdavi2@email.uky.edu](mailto:sqdavi2@email.uky.edu) to register employees for a class.

## Hospital fire forces 40 patients to evacuate

On February 23, 2005, a two-alarm fire forced the horizontal evacuation of 40 patients at El Camino Hospital in San Jose, CA.

The fire started in a supply closet, officials say.

Although a hospital maintenance engineer put out the fire with an extinguisher, thick smoke poured out of the closet, filling the corridors.

Patients on the fourth, fifth, and sixth floors were evacuated from the west wing to an area of refuge on the east wing. The wings are separated by smoke walls.

No patients were injured.

## Know the plan.

Hospital employees must know exactly what to do when *Yellow Sky* is announced.

- That's every employee...administrators, directors, managers, supervisors, workers...first shift, second shift, third shift, and weekends...people who have been here one week, employees who have been here 35 years. Every employee.
- They have to know the code and how it will be announced. Emergency pages are preceded by chimes that are designed to alert employees to stop and pay attention. The chimes are followed by the announcement or code. The code for tornado is *Yellow Sky*. If employees can hear the chimes but not the announcements, they must go to a location where they can hear better. All emergency pages are repeated at intervals.
- They have to know exactly what to do—where to go, who to report to, what specific actions to take. They can't rely on a card or a poster or a written procedure. They have to know—off the top of their heads—what to do when *Yellow Sky* is announced.

## The Basic Plan

When employees hear the *Yellow Sky* announcement, they must initiate the tornado response plan and begin moving patients, visitors, and themselves to areas of safety within the building.

Specifically, patient care staff is required to:

- Move ambulatory patients out of their rooms to an interior corridor.
- Turn patients away from the window and cover them with a blanket, if they cannot be moved into the corridor.
- Close all corridor and patient room doors.
- Remain in an interior corridor until the storm has passed and a *Yellow Sky All Clear* has been announced.

Employees who do not have patient care responsibility must:

- Move to an interior area or severe storm shelter.
- Close the doors.

No one expects employees to know what to do if a tornado strikes the hospital. Our response at that point depends on the severity of the damage. That's when the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS) would be activated to direct rescue and recovery operations.

## Why such a fuss? It's a matter of patient safety.

Hospital employees are the "guardians" of patients and visitors when it comes to safety in this environment. When a *Yellow Sky* is announced they have to be able to direct visitors to shelter areas and move patients to interior corridors. They have to be able to lead by example and know enough to explain the policies and procedures to those who may be reluctant to follow them.

## What is the code for tornado?

According to the Safety Survey, 97 hospital employees will be listening for a *Code Twister*.

- 161 will initiate tornado response when they hear *Code Red*.
- 214 will move to interior space when they hear *Black Cloud*.
- 2231 will respond when they hear *Yellow Sky*.

## Employees Improve Scores on Safety Knowledge Survey

Hospital employees averaged 87.5% on the 2004 safety survey, up 3 percentage points from 2003.

### 2004 Safety Survey Results at a Glance

Number of surveys completed		2703	
Average time to complete survey		10 min.	
<b>Overall Average Score</b>		<b>87.5%</b>	
<b>By Safety Topic</b>	<b>2004 Avg.</b>	<b>2003 Avg.</b>	<b>2002 Avg.</b>
Security	98%	94%	94%
Fire Prevention	96%	90%	93%
Emergency Management	89%	81%	95%
Hazardous Materials	87%	80%	92%
Utilities Management	86%	86%	93%
Medical Equipment	86%	76%	98%
Hot Topic	78%	95%	90%

### The Best of It

Over 99% of employees know that:

- All bomb threats are crimes, regardless of whether or not a bomb is planted, the police are notified, or anyone gets hurt.
- They must get a temporary ID badge from Security if they forget their permanent badge.
- They are considered essential and expected to report to work as scheduled, regardless of the weather.

### The Worst of It

Less than 70% of employees know that:

- Using alcohol-based hand cleanser is not a substitute for routine hand washing.
- Hospital fire doors are designated by red stickers affixed to the corner of the door.
- The operations section of HEICS is responsible for clinical response to an emergency.
- Not all hazardous waste should be disposed of in red bags.

### The Weird

- More than 6% of employees think that they should call Security to report a telephone outage.
- More than 5% of employees think that the flu is a stomach virus; 4% think that it is a normal phase of the common cold.
- Five percent of employees think that they don't have to wear PPE if they're not afraid of getting hurt.

