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# Staying Safe

**During Storm Season**

**Starts with Selecting**

***the Right Shelter***

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# Staying Safe During Storm Season Starts with Selecting the Right Shelter

A game plan to help you decide what shelter is right for you

BY JEFF TURNER

***The best offense is a good defense.*** This saying holds true in sports and storm safety. Getting the offensive advantage on unpredictable storms that will likely sweep through America this spring means taking a defensive stance by finding the best storm shelter option to keep you and your family safe.

Storm shelters that meet industry safety standards are built to withstand extremely high wind and debris impact, and are the safest option for keeping you and your family safe during a tornado.

To help you find the right storm shelter, we've developed a game plan that outlines things to remember when searching for the perfect fit for your family.

1. Verify the shelter's F scale rating, or its ability to maintain structural integrity based on a tornado's intensity and potential wind speed damage. The scale ranges from an F0 tornado with winds from 40 to 72 mph to an F6 tornado with devastating winds from 319-379 mph.

## F-SCALE INTENSITY

Scale	Approximate Wind Speeds
F0	40-72 mph
F1	73-112 mph
F2	113-157 mph
F3	158-206 mph
F4	207-260 mph
F5	261-318 mph
F6	319-379 mph

- **Above ground safe rooms**, which are reinforced steel closets, can typically withstand side impact and fallout from a tornado with up to an F3 rating, equal to side impact and gravity fallout from winds up to 200 mph).
- **Underground shelters** installed into the floor of your garage or backyard can withstand fallout impact from the most powerful tornado with an F6 rating, equal to winds up to 319 mph and debris pile up to 4,000 pounds.



*Above ground safe room*

2. Take note of the shelter's size and capacity limit. Industry standards require an above ground shelter to give three square feet of space per person. A standard size 4-by-4 above ground shelter comfortably holds three people. Standard size for an underground shelter is 4-by-6, which can hold six to eight people.
3. Know your price. Expect to pay an average of \$3,900 to \$5,500 for a high quality above ground or underground shelter. The cost will depend on the type, above ground or below ground, and size of shelter you need.
4. Learn how the shelter was manufactured and what products were used. High performance underground shelters are cut and form fabricated from a sheet of steel that is jig welded to meet design specifications. In its final form, the shelter should be hot dipped or galvanized to seal the metallic pores and prevent rust. Shelters that use cold tar epoxy instead of galvanized steel are prone to rust when they come in contact with dirt and underground elements.

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***TIP: Select a shelter that has a reinforced steel lid bearing with a come-along pull that can easily roll open and shut to bear the weight of fallen debris.***

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5. Ask about the installation process and rock removal costs. Finding unexpected rock during an excavation can lead to hefty, unforeseen costs and future damage to your shelter if it's not done properly. Talk to your storm shelter provider to verify that they're certified to remove any and all rock during your shelter installation.



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***TIP: Some shelter providers offer flat fee rock removal insurance that will cover all rock removal responsibility if they find rock during the excavation.***

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6. Make sure the shelter meets the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 320/ICC 500 standard, which verifies wind and impact resistance and overall quality of a storm shelter.

*Jeff Turner is president of National Storm Shelters, a nationally recognized safe room and storm shelter manufacturer. A manufacturer with more than 25 years experience, he devoted his manufacturing skills and expertise to creating a superior line of tornado shelters after his hometown was ravaged by F4 tornado. For more information about Jeff and his company, visit [www.nationalstormshelters.com](http://www.nationalstormshelters.com).*