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When hearing there's a tornado watch, do you console yourself or your family with the idea that it can't happen here?

That we're in a bowl that's sheltered from tornadoes, or that we're protected by an ancient Indian blessing?

Those myths may make us feel better, but actually learning how to tune in to official warnings and learning what to do and what not to do in severe weather are better ways to protect ourselves and our families.

In a nutshell, I recommend that you pay attention to forecasts, that you own and use a weather radio and that you know where you will take shelter when a tornado watch turns to a tornado warning. He added know what a warning siren means in your community and take it seriously.

Southeast Nebraska had six tornadoes on April 14 and there were 130-plus tornadoes that day in the area where they had been forecast, mostly in Kansas.

An afternoon downpour that caused flash-flooding in southeast Nebraska stabilized the atmosphere with cooler air and prevented more tornadoes from forming.

Do not become complacent because it didn't get as bad as it could have on April 14, and prepare for the rest of the storm season, which normally peaks in June.

Have a battery- or crank-powered weather radio that receives broadcasts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service.

Own and use a weather radio. Don't depend on friends, TV or radio. You need a NOAA weather radio.

But do stay tuned to TV and radio when possible, and do pay attention when someone tells you to take shelter. Check the weather more frequently when severe storms or tornadoes are forecast.

Know where you will and won't go if the weather looks bad, if there is a tornado watch, or when a tornado has been sighted and a warning has been issued.

If the weather is threatening and you're under a tornado watch, have a plan. Are you in an area with a tornado siren? Do you have an escape route? Don't head into a congested area. Many deaths occur when people are backed up in traffic jams.

Consider what kind of buildings you enter if there is a tornado watch.

Big box stores with big roofs are at risk of collapse. Think about all that stuff piled up on shelves, flying through at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour.

Some grocery stores are okay because they put people in a reinforced room like a cooler.

Make contingency plans at home. If you're on an upper floor of an apartment, go down and meet the people on the first floor. If you're in a mobile home, go someplace else that's safe.

Keep your valuables in a box that you can take with you if you need to take shelter, or can carry out of the house if it's on fire.

You're going to need to reestablish your life. What do you need? ID, your insurance card, passports, birth certificates, medications.

And finally, wear shoes, or make sure there's a pair where you'll be taking shelter, so that you're not climbing barefoot out of rubble.