



SEVERE WIND



the local scoop

Winds in Los Alamos County are typically **STRAIGHT-LINE WINDS**, which can overturn mobile homes, tear off roofs, topple trees, snap power lines, shatter windows, and sandblast paint from cars.

Los Alamos County is also subject to high winds from **MICROBURSTS**, small downbursts with an outflow less than 2.5 miles in horizontal diameter and last for only 2–5 minutes. Despite their small size, microbursts can produce destructive winds up to **168 MPH** and create hazardous conditions for pilots.

Although there are no records of **TORNADOES**—rotating columns of air whirling at destructive speeds—in Los Alamos County, **FUNNEL CLOUDS** and **DUST DEVILS** (such as the one that tore the roof off Barranca Mesa Elementary gymnasium in 2013) have been known to occur.

LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE OCCURRENCES: High. Strong winds occur annually in Los Alamos County.

BEFORE:

- Restock your **EMERGENCY KIT** to include non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, and batteries.
- Make a **FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN** in case your family is not together when severe wind occurs.
- Build a **SAFE ROOM** in your house that provides protection against high wind and flying debris. The interior space on the lowest level should be adequately anchored, and the walls must be strong enough to withstand wind pressure and penetration from wind-borne objects. Visit **FEMA.GOV** for more information.
- **ALERT** to changing weather conditions.
- If you see tornado **WARNING SIGNS** (dark sky, low-lying clouds, etc.), be prepared to take shelter.

DURING:

- **SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY.**
- If you are in a **PERMANENT STRUCTURE**, go to a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level.
- Put as many **WALLS** as possible between you and exterior walls, windows, and doors.
- Get below a sturdy table, and use your arms to **PROTECT YOUR HEAD** and neck.
- If you are in a **MANUFACTURED STRUCTURE**, get out immediately and go to the closest, lowest floor of a sturdy building or storm shelter. Mobile homes offer little protection from tornadoes.
- If you are outside with no shelter, get into a **VEHICLE**, buckle up, and drive to the closest permanent shelter. If your vehicle is hit by flying debris, pull over, park, and cover your head. Do not stop below an over pass or bridge.



- If you are outside without access to a shelter or a vehicle, lie in an area noticeably **LOWER** than the level of the open area, and cover your head.
- Be alert for **WIND-BORNE OBJECTS**; most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris.
- Do not open **WINDOWS**.

AFTER:

- Monitor **LOCAL NEWS** social media for emergency information.

