

Finding Shelter from the Storm



Identify appropriate severe weather shelters

- find the right place
- avoid the wrong place
- post the space

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Environmental Health and Safety

2408 Wanda Daley Drive
Ames, Iowa 50011-3602

(515) 294-5359 | www.ehs.iastate.edu

Copyright ©

Reviewed 2019

Where is the right place?



Every building on campus should have a designated area to provide shelter from severe weather. Although few buildings have certified tornado shelters, there are many spaces in buildings that provide protection from severe weather including tornados.

The key is to find a location without exterior doors or windows, preferably on the lowest level of your building. The space must be accessible at all times.

Buildings that need help to identify suitable spaces may contact [EH&S](#).



What makes a good shelter?

- basement
- interior hallway
- interior office or laboratory
- restroom
- stairwell (interior preferred)
- closet



What spaces should I avoid?



Shelter areas must be accessible when needed.

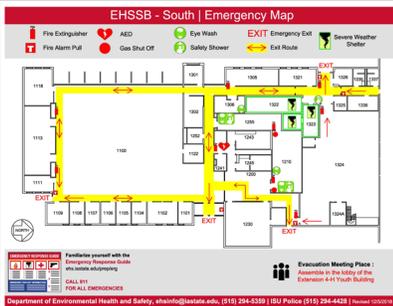
When trying to identify the best available shelter, you should visit every potential space. Avoid spaces that are difficult to access or require special keys.

Spaces with limited occupancy should be avoided, if possible. It is better to have several primary shelter areas in a building than many small areas scattered around the building.

What makes a poor shelter?

- elevator
- room that is normally locked
- space with large free-span roof area
- space with limited or restricted access
- space with other hazards present (chemical, electrical, or mechanical hazards)
- space with windows, especially large windows
- temporary building
- upper stories of building

How do I advertise shelter locations?



Once you identify the appropriate severe weather shelters, it is very important to inform not only the building occupants of the locations, but also your visitors.

The locations must be communicated visibly and clearly to be effective.

Ways to advertise shelter locations

- Discuss shelter locations and emergency procedures in department meetings, newsletters, or memos.
- Include shelter locations in notification plan.
- Include shelter locations on building emergency maps.
- Post direction signs in hallways.
- Post severe weather shelter signs near the entrance to the shelter areas.

[Shelter locations](#) are available on the EH&S website. Severe weather shelter signs are available by request from [EH&S](#).