

After the July 27, 2026 Fox Valley Tornado

Immediate help, displacement, property damage, cleanup, insurance, and neighbor action

Incident-specific community guide | Version 1.2 | Verified July 27, 2026 at 11:40 p.m. CDT

Prepared for Fox Valley residents and neighbors. Temporary locations and services can change quickly.

911

Life-threatening emergency: call 911

Call for injuries, fire, trapped or missing people, suspected gas danger, structural collapse, live wires, carbon monoxide symptoms, or another immediate threat to life.

211

Shelter, damage reporting, transportation, food, and recovery help: call 211

Dial 211 or 877-947-2211. Wisconsin 211 is the central starting point for essential needs and disaster aftercare. The City of Appleton directs residents to 211 to report storm damage and request resources.

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Before traveling or sharing this guide

Confirm temporary shelter, transportation, charging, road, and assistance information through 211 and current official incident pages. A correct address can become stale within hours.

Current verified help

The City of Appleton official incident page was last updated at 5:00 p.m. The following was checked again at 11:40 p.m. CDT. Call 211 before traveling because operating hours, capacity, pet arrangements, and access can change overnight.

Resource	Current information
Emergency shelter / reception	The City of Appleton listed Christ the Rock Community Church, W6254 US Highway 10/114, Menasha, and The Elks Lodge, 328 Nicolet Blvd., Menasha. Call 211 before traveling to confirm that a site is still operating and can meet household or pet needs.
Transportation	The City listed a bus pickup at 6080 S. Appleton Road, Menasha, behind Matthew's Tires. Confirm the pickup through 211 before relying on it. Residents who cannot reach shelter should call 211 so transportation assistance can be arranged.
American Red Cross	Wisconsin disaster assistance: 800-236-8680. Available help may include temporary shelter or housing, health services, mental-health assistance, financial assistance, and recovery support.
Roads	Stay off damaged-area roads when possible. Use 511 Wisconsin for certain closures and follow police, fire, public works, utility, and county instructions.
Appleton water	The City of Appleton reported that customers receiving City of Appleton water had safe drinking water. Residents served by another utility or a private well should follow their own provider's notices.
Current official pages	Check the City of Appleton Current Incident page and Outagamie County Current Disaster page. Official information should override screenshots, reposts, and earlier copies of this guide.

Do not assume a shelter accepts pets

Tell 211 or the shelter operator about pets, service animals, mobility needs, medical equipment, transportation needs, and language needs before traveling.

1. Get out of immediate danger

Leave the home or area immediately when there is:

- Fire, smoke, a natural gas odor, or hissing from a damaged line
- Sparking, exposed wiring, burning odor, or water touching electrical equipment
- A leaning wall, sagging ceiling, shifting roof, partial collapse, or unusual structural noises
- Downed wires, damaged poles, unstable trees, or debris hanging overhead
- Floodwater, sewage, chemical spills, or an evacuation order
- Any condition that makes the structure's safety uncertain

Suspected natural gas

Leave without using switches, appliances, garage-door openers, matches, lighters, or phones inside. Call 911 or the gas utility from a safe location.

Downed wires

Stay well away. Do not touch the wire or anything it may be energizing, including fences, vehicles, trees, wet ground, and standing water.

2. What to take if the home is compromised

60-second evacuation	10-minute controlled departure - only if officials or conditions indicate entry is safe
People and pets; essential medications; phone; identification and wallet; vehicle and house keys; glasses, hearing aids, and critical mobility equipment; sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.	Prepared go-bags; insurance and contact pouch; charging cables and power banks; carryable water and ready-to-eat food; clothing and hygiene supplies; pet carriers, leashes, food, water, medications, and records; child comfort item; essential work or school items; easily reached records.

Do not go back for things

No document, computer, keepsake, medication refill, or pet supply is worth entering a building that responders or visible conditions indicate is unsafe. Tell responders what remains inside.

3. Recovery timeline

When	Priority actions
First hour	Account for every person and pet. Leave immediate hazards. Call 911 for life threats. Send one short SAFE - LOCATION - PLAN message to the out-of-area contact. Call 211 for shelter, transportation, and essential needs.
First 24 hours	Report utility hazards, contact insurance and the landlord if renting, photograph exterior damage from a safe location, begin an incident log, save receipts, and arrange medication, pet care, work, school, and childcare needs.

When	Priority actions
Days 2-3	Confirm who may enter the property, document each affected room and item, obtain claim instructions, make only safe temporary repairs, and keep every estimate and communication.
First week	Review housing, transportation, food, medical, employment, school, and pet needs. Verify contractors, permits, insurance roles, and the scope of any proposed work before signing.
Before major repairs or disposal	Confirm the insurer's evidence and inspection requirements. Do not throw damaged property away or begin major demolition unless safety officials require it or the insurer has given instructions.

First 24 hours checklist

- ☐ Confirm every household member and pet is accounted for.
- ☐ Send one brief message to the out-of-area contact: SAFE - LOCATION - PLAN.
- ☐ Call 211 for shelter, transportation, food, water, clothing, charging, and disaster aftercare.
- ☐ Call the serving utility for outages, gas, or downed-line concerns after reaching safety.
- ☐ Notify the homeowners or renters insurance company and obtain a claim number.
- ☐ Notify the landlord or property manager if renting.
- ☐ Photograph exterior damage from a safe location before cleanup begins.
- ☐ Start a written incident log with times, names, instructions, expenses, and claim details.
- ☐ Save receipts for lodging, food, transportation, supplies, temporary repairs, and replacement items.
- ☐ Arrange medication, medical equipment, pet care, work, school, and childcare needs for the next day.
- ☐ Do not post publicly that the home is vacant or unsecured.

4. Who handles what

Your street address controls the jurisdiction

The correct municipality, county, building inspector, public works department, and utility may differ across the Fox Valley. Do not assume an Appleton or Outagamie County office handles property in Menasha, Fox Crossing, Neenah, or another municipality. Call 211 or your municipality if you are unsure.

Need	Start here
Immediate threat to life or public safety	911
Shelter, transportation, food, clothing, charging, healthcare, damage reporting, or disaster aftercare	Wisconsin 211: dial 211 or 877-947-2211
Electric outage, downed service line, or gas concern	The utility that serves the property; leave a gas-leak area before calling
Unsafe building, access, permits, debris rules, or local property questions	The municipality or county office responsible for the property address
Insurance claim and additional living expenses	Homeowners or renters insurer; obtain a claim number and written instructions
Rental access or habitability	Landlord/property manager and renters insurer
Unresolved insurance issue	Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance
Contractor complaint, pressure tactics, or suspected scam	Wisconsin DATCP Consumer Protection

Utility and emergency contacts

Provider / service	Emergency or outage contact	Use it for
911	Call 911	Injury, fire, trapped or missing person, immediate gas danger, collapse, live-wire danger, or carbon monoxide symptoms.
Wisconsin 211	211 or 877-947-2211	Shelter, housing, food, utilities, healthcare, transportation, government services, and disaster aftercare.
American Red Cross - Wisconsin	800-236-8680	Temporary shelter or housing, health services, mental-health support, financial assistance, and recovery help.
Menasha Utilities	Electric outage / downed line: 920-967-5190	Menasha electric-service problems. Use 911 as well for an immediate public hazard.
We Energies	Electric: 800-662-4797; Gas: 800-261-5325	Outages, downed lines, and gas leaks. Leave a gas-leak area before calling.
Wisconsin Public Service	Electric: 800-450-7240; Gas: 800-450-7280	Outages, downed lines, and gas leaks. Leave a gas-leak area before calling.
Wisconsin insurance	OCI: 800-236-8517	Questions or unresolved issues involving an insurer or claim.
Consumer protection	DATCP: 800-422-7128	Contractor complaints, storm-chaser concerns, scams, and consumer questions.

5. Document damage and start the claim

- 1. Notify the insurer promptly.** Ask what emergency repairs are allowed, what evidence is needed, how additional living expenses work, and whether damaged property must be kept for inspection.
- 2. Photograph and video safely.** Capture the exterior from several directions, each affected room when entry is authorized, damaged contents, serial numbers, and any temporary protection work.
- 3. Make a room-by-room list.** Record damaged or missing property, approximate age, original cost when known, and replacement information.
- 4. Prevent additional damage when safe.** A tarp, temporary board-up, or water shutoff may be reasonable. Do not attempt dangerous roof, electrical, gas, tree, or structural work.
- 5. Keep every receipt.** Save lodging, meals, transportation, cleanup supplies, pet boarding, temporary repairs, replacement necessities, and other disaster-related expenses.
- 6. Keep an incident log.** Record every call, name, date, instruction, estimate, payment, and document sent.

Renters

A landlord's policy generally protects the building, not the renter's personal property. Notify both the landlord and the renters-insurance company. Ask who is responsible for access, temporary repairs, and habitability decisions.

6. Cleanup without creating another emergency

Hazard	Safer action
Structural damage	Wait for clearance. Leave if the building shifts, creaks, or makes unusual noises. Do not move debris that may be supporting part of the structure.
Glass, nails, insulation, and dust	Wear thick-soled boots, long pants, heavy gloves, eye protection, and an appropriate mask.
Trees and limbs	Assume limbs may be under tension and overhead branches may fall. Use trained, insured professionals for large trees, lines, roofs, and unstable structures.
Electricity	Shut power off only when the panel is safely accessible and there is no standing water. Leave exposed wiring and utility lines to qualified crews.
Natural gas	Leave immediately. Do not operate switches or ignition sources. A professional must restore gas service after it has been shut off.
Fuel-burning equipment	Use generators outdoors, more than 20 feet from doors, windows, and vents. Keep grills, camp stoves, and fuel-burning heaters outdoors and use carbon monoxide detectors.
Water and food	Follow local water notices. Discard food when temperature or contamination safety is uncertain. Do not taste food to test it.
Mold, sewage, chemicals, or asbestos	Avoid disturbance and use qualified guidance or remediation. Keep children and pets away.

7. Contractors, insurance pressure, and scams

Storm damage attracts legitimate help and aggressive operators. Slow down before signing away money or rights.

- ☐ Ask the insurer, trusted neighbors, and established local sources for referrals.

- ☐ Require the contractor to inspect the job site - not quote major work only by phone or text.
- ☐ Check identity, physical address, insurance, references, complaints, permits, and local requirements.
- ☐ Get a written contract with scope, materials, price, payment schedule, start/end dates, warranties, and cleanup responsibilities.
- ☐ Do not pay the full amount upfront or sign over an insurance check.
- ☐ Do not sign a document presented as “just permission” without reading every provision.
- ☐ Do not let a contractor act as an insurance adjuster or control the claim unless the role is lawful, clear, and understood.
- ☐ Confirm required permits with the local building inspector and obtain final inspection before final payment.
- ☐ Report pressure tactics, fraud, or suspected storm chasers to DATCP at 800-422-7128.

8. What not to do after this storm

- ☐ Do not enter a visibly unstable or officially restricted building.
- ☐ Do not touch downed wires, damaged utility equipment, or anything the wire may be energizing.
- ☐ Do not use electrical switches, phones, flames, vehicles, or appliances near suspected natural gas.
- ☐ Do not climb onto damaged roofs or move structural debris.
- ☐ Do not allow children or pets to roam debris areas.
- ☐ Do not begin major cleanup before photographing and documenting damage.
- ☐ Do not throw damaged property away before the insurer’s instructions unless health or safety authorities require it.
- ☐ Do not use generators, grills, camp stoves, or fuel-burning heaters indoors, in garages, or near openings.
- ☐ Do not mix bleach with ammonia, acids, or other cleaning products.
- ☐ Do not drive into damaged neighborhoods to sightsee, take photos, or offer uncoordinated help.
- ☐ Do not block emergency vehicles, utility crews, debris equipment, or closed roads.
- ☐ Do not travel to a shelter, donation site, or pickup point without confirming it is open.
- ☐ Do not call 911 for routine power-restoration estimates, minor debris, or non-emergency insurance questions.
- ☐ Do not spread unverified shelter addresses, casualty claims, road closures, donation requests, or rumors.
- ☐ Do not self-deploy into restricted areas as a volunteer.
- ☐ Do not bring random donations unless an official organization has published a current need and receiving location.
- ☐ Do not sign repair contracts under pressure, pay in full upfront, or hand over an insurance check.
- ☐ Do not share identification, claim numbers, policy details, bank information, or one-time passcodes with unsolicited callers.
- ☐ Do not assume FEMA money or a federal program is available for this event unless Wisconsin Emergency Management, FEMA, or local officials formally announce it.
- ☐ Do not make major financial decisions while exhausted, frightened, or under immediate sales pressure.

9. How unaffected neighbors can help

Helpful	Not helpful
Check on nearby older adults, disabled residents, families with children, and people without transportation - without entering hazardous areas.	Driving into the damage zone to look around or record video.
Offer specific help: a safe place to charge, a meal, laundry, pet care, transportation, child care, a shower, or a place to sleep.	Posting vague offers that require a displaced person to organize the response.
Share official links with a visible timestamp and correct outdated posts.	Forwarding screenshots with no date, source, or verification.

Helpful	Not helpful
Donate money or currently requested items through established organizations.	Dropping unsorted clothing, food, or household goods at an unconfirmed location.
Volunteer through an organization that provides assignment, safety briefing, and accountability.	Showing up with chainsaws, tools, or vehicles and entering private or restricted property.
Leave roads and curb space clear for responders, utility crews, and residents.	Parking near damaged properties or blocking debris routes.

10. Incident log

Plan item	Household answer
Insurance company / claim number	_____
Adjuster / contact	_____
Temporary lodging	_____
Utility reports / confirmation numbers	_____
Landlord / property manager	_____
Municipality / building inspector	_____
Contractor estimates	_____
Receipts stored at	_____
Important instructions received	_____
Next follow-up date	_____

Call and expense notes

Date / time	Who / organization	Instruction, confirmation number, or expense

Official sources and live information

1. [City of Appleton - Tornado | July 27, 2026](#) - Official incident page; latest posted update was 5:00 p.m. when this guide was verified.
2. [Outagamie County - Current Disaster: July 2026 Tornado](#) - County emergency-management updates.
3. [211 Wisconsin](#) - Shelter, transportation, damage reporting, essential needs, and disaster aftercare.
4. [American Red Cross - Wisconsin Get Help](#) - Disaster relief and recovery; 800-236-8680.
5. [CDC - Safety Guidelines: After a Tornado](#) - Health and safety after a tornado.
6. [Wisconsin OCI - After a Storm Hits](#) - Insurance claim and documentation guidance.
7. [Wisconsin DATCP - Storm Damage Repairs](#) - Contractor and scam precautions.
8. [511 Wisconsin](#) - Official traffic, closure, and incident information.
9. [Menasha Utilities - Contact Us](#) - Electric outage and utility contacts.
10. [We Energies - Emergencies](#) - Electric and gas emergency numbers.
11. [Wisconsin Public Service](#) - Outage and utility information.

Before sharing this guide

Check the City of Appleton and Outagamie County incident pages and call 211. Cross out or update any temporary location that has closed. Add a new verified date and time so neighbors can judge freshness.

Important limitation

This community guide does not replace instructions from emergency responders, utilities, building officials, public health, insurers, or other responsible authorities.