GOVERNOR'S DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

For immediate release:

TORNADO SAFETY FOR TEXANS

AUSTIN – Tornadoes can occur at any time of year in Texas, but they happen most often in spring and summer. Storms are most likely to strike in the late afternoon and early evening hours. Spokesmen for the Governor's Division of Emergency Management urge Texans to monitor TV and radio broadcasts for storm information, as well as NOAA weather radio.

A *TORNADO WATCH* is issued when severe weather is expected along with large or multiple tornadoes. It means *WATCH* the sky. A *TORNADO WARNING* means *TAKE ACTION* because a tornado is on the ground. Seek shelter immediately. A tornado warning usually covers one county or a portion of a county and generally lasts for an hour or less.

When a tornado is sighted, the most important rule is to ***get low and stay low***.

- Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor of the home, such as a bathroom, closet or room without windows.
- In an office building, go to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- Leave your mobile home and take shelter in a nearby building. If no building is nearby, lie flat in a ditch or ravine.
- Never stay inside a car. Leave the car and lie flat in a ditch or a ravine. If a building is nearby, take shelter inside. Never try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- At school, follow plans and go to a designated shelter area, usually interior hallways on the lowest floor. Avoid auditoriums, gyms and areas with wide, free-span roofs.
- Go to the interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor of a shopping center. Do not leave the shopping center to get in your car.
- If you are in open country, take cover on low, protected ground.
- Avoid areas near exterior glass or doors, areas along exterior walls, or rooms with wide expanse roofs – such as auditoriums, cafeterias and gyms.

For more information, contact Mary Lenz or Megan Arredondo at (512) 424-2138 or visit GDEM's Web site: www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem.