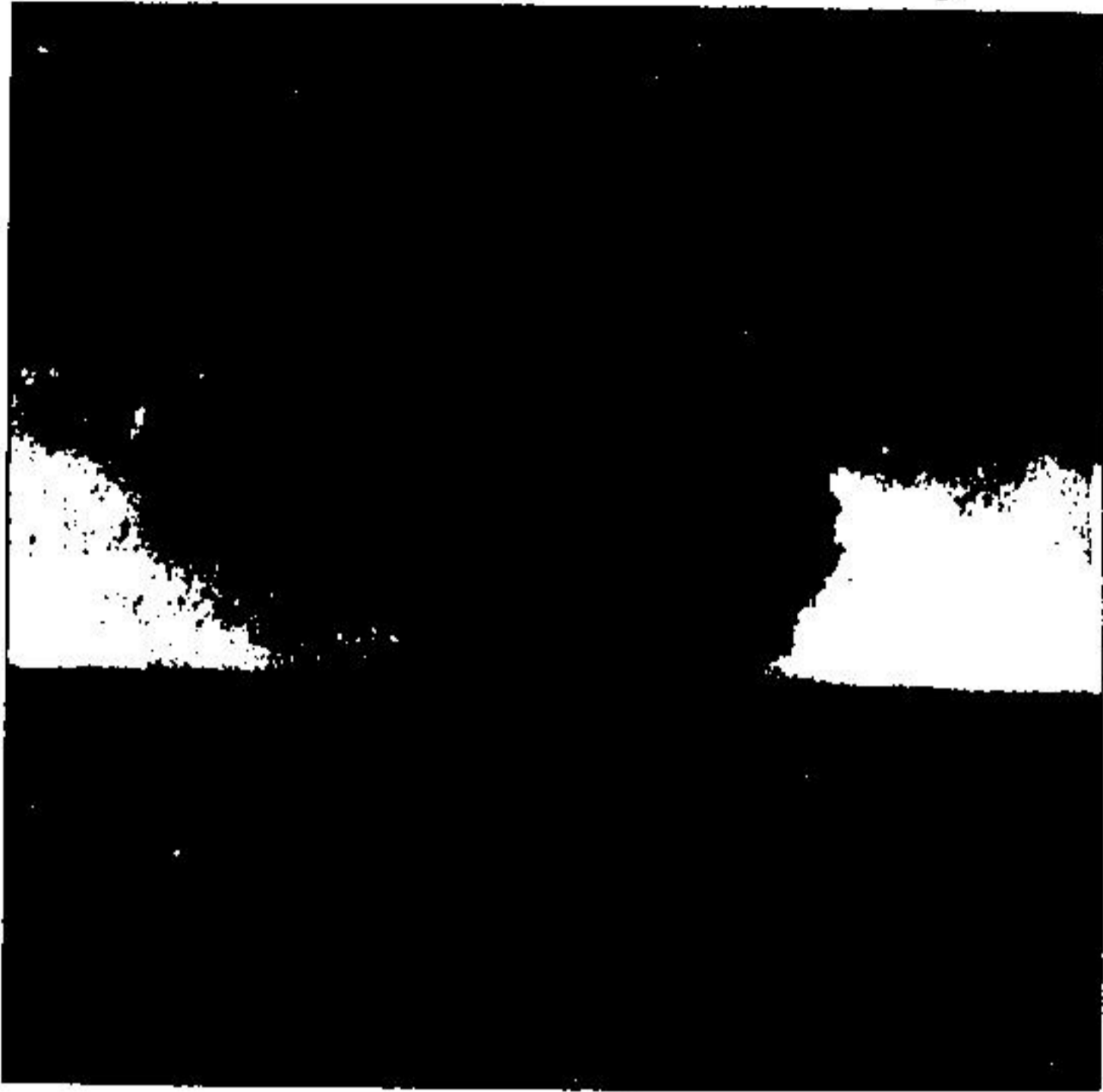


It's tornado time—test your knowledge



(NC)—Most Canadians have never experienced a tornado, but they still pose a very real threat to life and property. There are, on average, 75 tornadoes a year in Canada, and between 1984 and 1987, tornadoes caused 44 deaths and 550 injuries, not to mention millions of dollars worth of damage.

According to Environment Canada's Atmospheric and Environment Service, tornadoes have occurred in every part of the country except the Arctic. They occur most frequently in the area stretching from the Rocky Mountains eastwards to New Brunswick, with the highest risk areas being southwestern Ontario and southeastern Manitoba.

Chances are you'll never experience a tornado, but if you do, you'll want to be prepared. Test your knowledge of tornado safety by answering True or False to the following statements. The answer you give today, may save your life tomorrow.

1. The best place to be during a tornado is the southwest corner of your

house.

False. The best place to be during a tornado is in your basement under a work-bench or table; either will protect you from debris hurled into the basement. If you don't have a basement then seek shelter in a small interior room such as a bathroom or closet. Stay away from windows and outside walls.

2. If you live in a mobile home it is safer to stay inside during a tornado rather than seek shelter elsewhere.

False. Mobile homes offer no protection against the power of a tornado. It is far better to seek shelter elsewhere, preferably below ground. If no such shelter is available then lie down in a ditch, depression or culvert and protect head with your hands.

3. If you are in a vehicle when you spot a tornado, it is safer to remain in the vehicle and try to outrun or avoid the tornado.

False. It is extremely risky to try and drive to safety. Given the unpredictable nature of tornadoes, it is far better to get out of the car and seek shelter in a ditch,

depression or culvert. Make sure you're a good distance from the car so it can't roll on you.

4. Partly opening the windows of your residence before a tornado strikes will help prevent windows from being blown in or out.

False. Tornado winds are so strong that opening windows will have little effect one way or the other. The best rule to follow always is stay away from windows.

5. Avoid seeking shelter in buildings with wide free-span roofs such as gymnasiums, church sanctuaries and auditoriums.

True. These types of structures are far more likely to collapse if hit by a tornado. If you are in one of these buildings and have no time to get out, try to seek shelter under a table or some other kind of sturdy cover.

6. Modern reinforced concrete buildings are completely immune to the effects of tornadoes.

False. While the basic structure of a high-rise is immune, the windows still present a considerable danger. If you are in a high-rise threatened by a tornado, you should take shelter in an interior hallway or room, preferably on the lower floors or in the basement. The same rule applies to schools. Don't use the elevators as the power can be cut off during a tornado.

7. There is no way to get advance warning of a tornado.

False. When severe thunderstorms threaten, turn on your radio or TV and listen for local weather information. If a tornado has been reported or sighted a Tornado Warning will be issued. If you seek shelter, take along a battery-powered radio so you can find out what is happening.

8. Tornadoes always jump over valleys or low spots.

False. Tornadoes have been known to climb ridges and descend into valleys and low-lying areas.

9. Tornado weather systems are a threat to small boats on lakes and rivers.

True. Small boats should seek safe harbour at the first sign of the approaching thunderstorms.

10. In Canada tornadoes usually occur in the late afternoon or in the early evening and are most common between the beginning of June and the end of August. True.

Sleep trends: baby boomers create market for bigger, better beds

(NC)—Home sweet home. It has suddenly become the place to be after work and on weekends — both for families and no-longer-swinging singles. This lifestyle trend dubbed "cocooning," has consumers scrambling to feather their nests with premium-quality, comfort-oriented furniture and home appliances, from plush couches to stereo VCRs.

Naturally, "cocooning" also has extended into the bedroom. Today's baby boomers, the burgeoning 35-50 age group, are nesting on beds that are bigger, more comfortable and more luxurious than ever before.

This demand for luxury has spawned a new generation of sleep technology—bedding that offers unprecedented comfort without sacrificing support, says Nancy Butler, director of the Better Sleep Council, a non-profit educational group established more than a decade ago.

"Our goal is to educate consumers that bedding has changed significantly in recent years," Ms. Butler explains. "Many new mattress shoppers will be surprised to learn that 'firm' no longer means 'hard'. Today's bedding combines deep-down support with extra layers of soft cushioning that cradle the body in sheer comfort."

To achieve this new luxury, manufacturers are drawing on a wide range of cushioning materials, including super-soft polyurethane foams, high-loft polyester fiberfills, quality latex foam, resilient wool fibers, natural cotton and even goose down. For the best in underlying support, manufacturers are using

the most advanced innerspring designs, new classes of high resilience foams, and generations of water and air-based support systems.

The appearance of this "new age" bedding also is more luxurious. Not only does it look thicker and plusher, its ticking is quilted in attractive, colorful damasks and knit fabrics, making it much more visually exciting. Some top-of-the-line mattresses now feature "pillow top" construction: an extra-thick layer of super-soft cushioning attached to the top of the mattress, almost like having a built-in comforter that you sleep on.

The effect is like falling into a cloud of supportive softness that gives sleepers a whole new experience.

Ms. Butler urges consumers shopping for this new genre of bedding to discard old notions about firmness, overcome their shyness, and simply lie down and try several different mattress sets.

"It can be one of the most confusing purchases anyone makes," she acknowledges. "What one manufacturer calls 'firm' may be another manufacturer's 'super-firm'. Consumers need to look beyond those terms and choose the set with the combination of support and comfort that feels just right for them."

The Better Sleep Council suggests that sleep problems are often bed problems and advises replacing your mattress and foundation every 8 to 10 years.

And, as Butler says, "anyone who hasn't shopped for a bed in the last few years is in for a surprise when they see the quality and experience the luxury."

For more information on practical ways to improve your sleep, send for The Better Sleep Council's free booklet, "A Guide to Better Sleep," (French/English edition), P.O. Box 1277, Station B, Downsview, Ontario, M3H 5V6.



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