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Severe weather is no stranger to Minnesota, but people are still taken by surprise when they could have been prepared. This year during **Severe Weather Awareness Week**, take time to learn about the types of severe weather that affect Minnesota and what to do to protect your family and community.

Tornado Warning Systems

Knowing the difference between tornado watch and tornado warning signs is very important. It will help you to decide what to do when a tornado is coming.

Tornado Watch means a tornado may develop. During a tornado watch, you should be on alert and prepared for the possibility of a tornado. The watch may cover a time period of up to eight hours, so be alert and turn on your radio or television.

Tornado Warning means a tornado has been spotted or has been formed and is nearby and can strike within minutes. So when you hear a tornado warning system sound, seek shelter immediately. Turn on a radio or television in your shelter to stay updated on the weather.

Sirens

A siren is a sound to signal or warn the public of possible danger to the community. Sirens are sounded in the event of an approaching tornado, severe thunder or lightning storms, hazardous material spills, power-plant malfunctions, terrorism and other emergencies threatening the area.

There are *two types* of siren signals that the City of Minneapolis tests:

- ◆ The first signal is a steady tone and is used for tornadoes and severe weather.
- ◆ The second signal is a warbling sound and is used for other types of emergencies.

The sirens are tested on the first Wednesday of every month at 1 p.m. to familiarize the residents.

What Should You Do if You Hear an Emergency Siren?

Turn on a local TV or radio station to find out the nature of the emergency. It's not a good idea to automatically go to the basement – the sirens can also sound to warn of flash floods. Once you know what kind of emergency it is, you can take the proper action.

Every home should have a battery operated or hand-cranked radio. It's safer in a lightning storm, more reliable in a power outage and can be taken with you to a shelter if necessary.

“Just because the sirens wind down, that doesn't mean the danger has passed.”

says Capt. Rick Mulek, communications coordinator for the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

NOAA Weather Radio

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting weather information directly from the National Weather Service. An NOAA weather radio sounds warnings automatically by radio signal. NOAA radios can be purchased at stores that sell electronic equipment. For more information please go to www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/nwrrcvr.htm or www.weather.gov/nwr/special_need.htm for NOAA radios for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Resources

www.codeready.org

www.redcross.org

www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/safety.html



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Health & Family Support
and
Emergency Preparedness

Helping
Minneapolis families
prepare themselves,
their homes and
their neighborhoods
for emergencies.



Click [here](#) to learn more from **codeReady** about how to get prepared. Then share what you learned with your family and friends.



Attention. If you want help translating this information, call 612-673-3737

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500

Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800

Sign Language:
TTY 612-673-2626



Tornado Safety

Every spring brings with it the possibility of severe weather, including floods, high winds and tornadoes. Minneapolis and much of the Twin Cities metro area are actually along the northernmost boundary of what is often referred to as Tornado Alley.

How to Identify a Tornado

- ◆ A green or green-black sky
- ◆ A funnel-shaped cloud
- ◆ A low-lying, black cloud
- ◆ Swirling dust or debris, debris falling or being pulled upwards
- ◆ Strange cloud behavior, such as clouds moving very fast, swirling or converging
- ◆ A sudden drop in temperature
- ◆ A sudden calm after wind

If you see a tornado or signs of a tornado in the sky, seek shelter immediately.

Always stay away from windows.

Sheltering During Severe Weather

- ◆ **In a house with a basement:** Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under sturdy protection (heavy table or workbench), or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor and crush you.

- ◆ **In a house with no basement, a dorm or an apartment:** Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell, or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down; and cover your head with your hands. A bathtub may offer partial protection. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding (mattress, blankets, etc.), to protect against falling debris in case the roof and ceiling fail.
- ◆ **In a car or truck:** Vehicles are extremely dangerous in a tornado. If the tornado is visible and far away and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles away from the tornado. Otherwise, park the car as quickly and safely as possible – out of the traffic lanes. Get out and seek shelter in a sturdy building. If in the open country, run to low ground away from any cars (which may roll over on you). Lie flat and face-down, protecting the back of your head with your arms. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges, they can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

Disaster Supplies Kit

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Store the disaster supply kit in an easy-to-carry container such as backpack or duffel bag. The kits can be used in case you have to leave your home quickly or if you must remain in your home for an extended time. To create your own custom kit, please go to: www.codeready.org/kit.cfm