

# Keeping Minnesota *Ready*



## TORNADO DRILL DAY

For more than 20 years, the state of Minnesota has conducted **Severe Weather Awareness Week** in partnership with the National Weather Service and local governments. A statewide tornado drill is part of that event.

Most local and statewide radio, TV and cable stations will be participating in the drill. Television viewers and radio station listeners and TV viewers should hear or see a simulated tornado warning message at 1:45 p.m. This tornado drill warning should last about one minute. When the test is completed, stations should return to normal programming.

In addition, alerts for both the simulated tornado watches and warnings will be issued over the NOAA Weather Radios in the area which will activate the radio alerts. The afternoon drill will also occur at the same time in Wisconsin and is expected to be broadcast on most radio and TV stations in the state.

## THE DRILLS

Counties and cities own, operate and maintain all local sirens, and set their own policy on how and when to activate them. The National Weather Service does not operate them. There are many different policies regarding siren activation that are used by the various cities and counties. Some will activate sirens across the entire county for tornado warnings only.

Others will activate sirens countywide for tornado warnings and all severe thunderstorm warnings. Some will activate sirens across the entire county for tornado warnings and severe thunderstorms that have winds of at least 70 or 75 mph. Others will activate sirens only for portions of counties. Local officials may also sound the sirens anytime they believe severe weather is a threat, even if there is no warning from the National Weather Service.

Sirens normal sound for about three minutes, and then go silent. It is very rare to keep the sirens sounding for the entire warning, since that would cause the backup battery to run out, which would be critical in the event that power goes out. Furthermore, the siren motor will fail much more quickly if the siren sounds continuously. Some jurisdictions may repeat siren activation every few minutes. Please check with your local public safety officials for details on when warning sirens are sounded in your community.

## AFTERNOON TORNADO DRILL APRIL 24, 2014 - 1:45 P.M.

The drill traditionally occurs on Thursday afternoon at 1:45 p.m., when jurisdictions across Minnesota sound their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and other facilities are encouraged to conduct a tornado drill at this time to practice their tornado sheltering plans.

## EVENING TORNADO DRILL APRIL 24, 2014 - 6:55 P.M.

The reason for a 6:55 p.m. drill is that severe weather including tornadoes occurs most often between 3 and 8 p.m. The statewide 1:45 p.m. drill gives institutions, first-shift and day workers a time to practice, but it does not allow second-shift workers the same opportunity. The 6:55 p.m. tornado drill also allows families to practice their sheltering plans.

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## SCHEDULE

The National Weather Service, Wisconsin Emergency Management, the Minnesota Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and other state, county and local agencies have come together to host Severe Weather Awareness Week activities. On Thursday April 24, 2014 simulated tornado watches and warnings will be issued to test the statewide warning and communications systems. All counties in Minnesota normally participate in the first drill at 1:45 p.m. unless actual severe weather is expected. The schedule is as follows:

**1:00 PM:** The National Weather Service will issue a simulated tornado watch for Wisconsin and Minnesota (except the northwest portion of Minnesota).

**1:40 PM:** The National Weather Service will issue a simulated tornado warning for 9 counties of western Wisconsin (Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk and St Croix). Note that most cities and counties will activate outdoor warning siren systems.

**1:45 PM:** The National Weather Service will issue a simulated tornado warning for Minnesota counties (except those in the northwestern part of the state). Note that most cities and counties will activate outdoor warning siren systems.

**2:00 PM:** The National Weather Service will issue an "End of Test" message using the Severe Weather Statement product. It should be stated that outdoor warning sirens will not be sounded again for this all clear, nor will there be any warning tone on NOAA Weather Radio.

**6:55 PM:** The National Weather Service offices will also issue another simulated tornado warning. Most counties including all in the metro area in Minnesota take part. The second drill is issued to allow families to practice their preparedness in the home and community and for evening shift workers. Participation in the second drill at 6:55 p.m. is voluntary by each county. [Check with your local county emergency manager to find out if they are participating.](#)

**NOTE: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN ALL-CLEAR SIREN.**

Want to participate in the drill but don't know how? [Check out this information sheet](#) for some ideas on how you or your organization can participate.