Severe Weather Warnings





With recent weather emergencies that have occurred in the River Forest area, it is always a good idea to review our weather warning system. River Forest has two outdoor warning sirens. One is located on the roof of the Village Hall and the second is located on a pole at the Pumping Station located at Jackson and Berkshire. Although they have been upgraded and updated through the years, this same system started out as the system to warn residents of a possible attack from foreign countries during the Cold War era back in the 1950's and 1960's. The outdoor warning sirens are tested on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00am, unless there is threatening weather in the area.

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Although we observe Severe Weather Awareness Week in March every year, it's always important to refresh our memories about severe weather and the warnings we can get prior to an actual Severe Weather event. On average, the State of Illinois will see 53 tornadoes each year with nearly 20-percent occurring at night. Perhaps the earliest warning we can get is listening to our daily local weather forecasts. With new radar and weather technologies, local meteorologists can start letting us know a day of two in advance that storms may be coming.

Outdoor Weather Warning Sirens

By the name alone, outdoor weather warning sirens are intended to notify people who may be outdoors and it is a signal to stop what they are doing and seek a substantial building to take refuge. Although you may be close enough to the location of the siren to hear it indoors, Outdoor Weather Warning Sirens are not intended to be heard indoors.

A very important reminder, Outdoor warning sirens ***WILL NOT*** sound an all clear signal. When a severe weather event is occurring, the National Weather Service will issue a weather warning with a general timeframe. It is best to stay inside, away from windows until that timeframe has passed. If that warning timeframe is extended, the Nation Weather Service will issue another Tornado Warning which would then prompt another activation of the outdoor sirens. If there was an "all clear" signal, people would be confused if the second siren was an "all clear" or another warning.

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For a number of reasons, tornadoes that occur at night are twice as likely to result in fatalities. The National Weather Service and state and local emergency management officials strongly encourage people to have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) All Hazards Weather Radio with battery backup. These radios can be programmed to receive alerts for specified counties to keep you and your family aware of impending weather and post-event information for all types of hazards. When an alert is issued for the programmed area, the device will sound a warning alarm tone followed by the essential information such as where to tune for more information.

Wireless Emergency Alerts

In addition to NOAA weather radios, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) can provide lifesaving information about impending storms and emergencies. These alerts can be sent to your mobile device without the need to download an app or subscribe to a service. Not only are these tools critical to surviving over-night storms, but they can be extremely beneficial for those who travel. Wireless Emergency Alerts are text messages that are sent to your mobile device in case of emergency. The alerts will show the type and duration, any action you should take and the agency issuing the alert. The message will be no more than 90 characters. The type of alerts you may receive are:

- Imminent Threats and Local Weather Emergencies (which includes weather and storm warnings)
- AMBER Alerts
- Presidential Messages in the event of a national emergency

For IPhone users, you can activate the warnings by starting in your Settings, scroll down to Notifications. At the bottom of the scroll you will see "Government Alerts". Activate the alerts you would like to receive.

For Android users, Go to your Settings, scroll to Advanced Settings, scroll to Wireless Emergency Alerts and highlight the notifications you would like to receive.

****Please keep in mind that some settings and directions may be different depending on the model/age of your cell phone.****

If you are outdoors when the siren is activated, DO NOT seek refuge under a tent or canopy. Winds can turn the tent or canopy into a sail in a matter of moments. Thunderstorms can produce damaging winds, deadly lightning, large hail, flash floods and tornadoes and a tent or canopy is no match for severe weather.

For more information on Severe Weather Preparation please call the River Forest Fire Prevention at 708-714-3562.