

SEVERE WEATHER SEASON IS UPON US—BE PREPARED!

With springtime in full swing and the clash of the cold winter air with the warm summer air trying to take over, the potential for damaging severe weather increases dramatically. In fact, April through July are the peak months for tornado occurrence in Ohio. The City of Brook Park has installed an outdoor warning siren system to alert our residents of approaching severe weather.

Outdoor warning sirens are the most effective method to warn people at large in the shortest amount of time that a hazard exists. They are designed to warn people that are outside and not inside a residence or building. If the outdoor warning sirens are activated, residents should immediately seek shelter and determine the nature of the hazard by listening to the local radio or television or NOAA Weather Radio. **RESIDENTS SHOULD NOT CALL 911, THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, OR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WHEN THE SIRENS ARE ACTIVATED.**

The decision to activate the outdoor warning sirens is based on information that is available at the time. Sometimes this information is incomplete and changes rapidly. In the interest of safety, it is the policy of the city to err on the side of caution. The outdoor warning sirens will be activated in order to give residents as much time as possible to take measures to ensure their safety.

An outdoor warning siren system is only successful if everyone knows how it sounds, the meaning behind the different sounds, and that the system is operating properly. Therefore, as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), we conduct a full test of our warning sirens monthly to ensure that the residents of the community become familiar with the sounds and that the system is operating as it should. The tests are short and very much necessary to ensure the residents are familiar with various siren sounds. The warning sirens will be tested at noon (12 pm) on the first Saturday of every month. For the purposes of testing, the alert warning will sound for 1 minute followed by 1 minute of silence, and then the attack warning will sound for 1 minute completing the test.

The alert warning is a steady pitch sound, and when the sirens are normally activated for an emergency, they will sound for 3 minutes. The alert warning signal is a means to alert residents to peacetime emergencies such as a severe weather warning, hazardous material incident, or a tornado warning (The attack warning is a warbling (wailing) pitch sound. The attack warning signal shall mean that an actual attack against the country had been detected and that protective action should be taken immediately).

The National Weather Service will issue a **SEVERE WEATHER WATCH** or **TORNADO WATCH** when conditions are favorable for their development. Listen to your local news or radio stations or NOAA Weather Radio for up-to-date weather information.

The National Weather Service will issue a **SEVERE WEATHER WARNING** or **TORNADO WARNING** when severe weather or a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar or sighted by storm spotters. Seek safe shelter immediately when a warning is issued—get to the lowest level of your home---away from the windows and under something sturdy. Continue to monitor your local news or radio stations or NOAA Weather Radio for up-to-date weather information.

Tornado Safety Tips

Whether practicing a tornado drill or sheltering during a tornado warning, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourages everyone to **DUCK**.

D – Go **DOWN** to the lowest level

U – Get **UNDER** something

C – **COVER** your head

K – **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed

- Be prepared for severe weather before a storm watch or warning is issued. Meet with household members to develop a disaster plan to respond to all hazards, including tornado watches and warnings. Conduct regular tornado drills. Know how to turn off the water, gas and electric at the main switches.
- If you are a person with special needs, register your name and address with your local emergency management agency, police and/or fire departments before any natural or man-made disaster occurs.
- The NOAA Weather Radio has alerting tools available for people who are hearing impaired. Some weather radio receivers can be connected to an existing home security system, similar as a doorbell, smoke detector or other sensor. For additional information, visit the NWS NOAA Weather Radio link: http://www.weather.gov/nwr/special_need.htm
- The safest place to be during a tornado is a basement. If the building has no basement or cellar, go to a small, centrally located room on the lowest level of the building, such as a bathroom or closet or interior hallway.
- If you are in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little or no protection from tornadoes.
- If you are outside with no shelter, lie in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under a highway overpass or bridge. You will be exposed to stronger winds and flying debris.

Since 1978, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness has been dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan and prepare for severe weather incidents and home emergencies *before* they happen. For additional information on tornado safety and severe weather preparedness, visit the OCSWA Web site at:

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.