

Outdoor Warning Sirens

Monthly Testing

The City's outdoor weather warning system has 153 sirens that alert people who are outdoors warning them to seek shelter in the event of a tornado. The system is tested on the first Wednesday of every month at 12:00 noon weather permitting. We do not test the sirens if the weather is bad or threatening; this helps to ensure that there will be no confusion as to whether it is a test or a real alert. The main purpose of the sirens is to warn individuals that are outdoors to seek immediate shelter. Since many outdoor sounds, including the weather sirens, cannot penetrate many buildings, the sirens are not intended to be heard while indoors unless you are located very near to a siren.

During an Emergency

In the event of a Tornado Warning residents will hear a 3 to 5 minute steady signal of the sirens. When you hear the sirens during bad weather, go indoors and seek shelter in the most interior room in your home or office. You should avoid the outside walls and windows. An interior bathroom, closet, or other room is generally the safest location. Cover yourself with pillows or get under heavy furniture for protection. If you have access to a radio or television, turn it on to a local channel to listen for essential emergency information. All local channels will interrupt programming to issue Tornado Warnings and advise you where the tornado is located. Please do not call local fire or police agencies to ask why the sirens are sounding unless immediate assistance is needed.

If you are outdoors when the sirens go off

If you are outdoors when the outdoor warning sirens are activated seek shelter immediately. If shelter is not available and severe weather is in the area lie in a ditch, ravine, culvert or low-lying area. Make sure that the low-lying area that you choose is not prone to flooding. Use your arms or a piece of clothing to protect your head and neck.

If you are in a mobile home or a vehicle

Mobile homes and vehicles are extremely vulnerable to the effects of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. One third of tornado deaths nationwide occur in mobile homes. Residents of mobile home parks should have a designated shelter in the community or a plan for residents to evacuate to an off-site shelter location. Find out about the tornado shelter plan in your community. If there is no time to get to shelter, abandon the mobile home or vehicle and lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression with your hands covering your head. NEVER try to out run a tornado.