

Severe Weather Awareness Week, April 17th-21st, 2023

04-17-2023

Statewide Tornado Drills – Thursday, April 20 - 1:45pm & 6:45pm

The most important events during Severe Weather Awareness Week are the two annual statewide tornado drills. Outdoor warning sirens will sound in a simulated tornado warning. These drills are an excellent opportunity for residents to prepare their homes, families, neighborhoods and communities!

Afternoon Tornado Drill - 1:45 p.m.

Schools, businesses and other facilities are encouraged to conduct a tornado drill at this time to practice their tornado sheltering plans.

Evening Tornado Drill- 6:45 p.m.

The reason for a 6:45 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 6:45 p.m. tornado drill also allows families to practice their sheltering plans.

Outdoor Warning Siren Network

The City of Lake Elmo owns and maintains 9 outdoor warning sirens throughout the city. Our siren network is tested and activated through the Washington County 911 Communication Center. Outdoor warning sirens are meant to be heard outside. When sirens sound, residents should always seek shelter and tune to local weather information on radio, television, or NOAA weather radio for more information. When the sirens are sounded, they will run for three minutes and then stop. ***The threat of severe weather does not stop when the sirens stop.*** Residents should continue to shelter and stay tuned to local weather information on radio, television or NOAA Weather Radios for the duration of the warning period.

Outdoor warning siren activation is based on the following criteria:

- Washington County Sheriff's Office 911 Communication Center tests/activates all sirens in the Washington County at 1:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month, from March through October.
- When a Tornado Warning is issued for Washington County by the National Weather Service.
 - Sirens are activated for each Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service. It is possible for a new Warning to be issued before a previous Warning expires.
- When the National Weather Service indicates sustained wind speeds of 70 miles per hour or more.
- When a City or County Public Safety Official (Sherriff, Fire) requests activation due to imminent danger to life and/or property. In this situation, Washington County also notifies the National Weather Service Office in Chanhassen.