



2012 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Drill Scheduled for Thursday April 19, 2012

There are two new and important changes to the 2012 Tornado Drill.

First, the drill times have changed with all counties participating in the mock tornado warning at the same time.

DRILL SCHEDULE:

1:00 pm – National Weather Service issues a mock tornado watch for all of Wisconsin (a watch means tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms).

1:45pm - National Weather Service issues mock tornado warning for all of Wisconsin (a warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated on weather radar. Move to a place of safety immediately).

2:00 pm - END OF MOCK TORNADO WATCH/WARNING DRILL

If actual severe weather occurs anywhere in the state on April 19, the tornado drill will be postponed until Friday, April 20 with the watch/warning issued at the same time.

Second, the drill will be a true, end-to-end test involving interruption of broadcast radio, TV and cable stations and tone-alerting of the test watch and warning on NOAA Weather Radios (also known as Emergency Weather Radios). This is an historic first in Wisconsin. The tornado warning at 1:45pm will last about one minute on radio and TV stations across Wisconsin. (The drill will also occur at the same time in Minnesota and will be broadcast on radio and TV stations in that state as well). When it is done stations will return to normal programming. Television viewers and radio station and emergency radio listeners will hear a message indicating that **"this is a test."**



This is a great opportunity for you to practice your tornado emergency plan with family, friends, and co-workers. Hundreds of schools will also participate in the drill. Then during tornado season, **Listen, Act and Live.** Don't ignore watches and warnings. Listen and take action. Every second counts. Don't wait... go to a safe place right away!

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Frequently Asked Questions about the Tornado Test

How does the National Weather Service deliver this tornado test and real tornado watches and warnings? They use something called the Emergency Alert System.

What is the Emergency Alert System (EAS)? EAS is a national public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Alerting authorities like the National Weather Service can also use the state and local EAS to send alerts and warnings to radio and television stations, cable television, and NOAA Weather Radios (also known as Emergency Weather Radios).

Why do this test? The National Weather Service, Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association felt it was important to allow the public to truly test their NOAA Weather Radio receivers which can only be activated using a real Tornado Warning code. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) required a waiver for this Live Code Testing to be conducted. This code also triggers the alert to air on broadcast radio, TV and cable stations. The ultimate goal of any drill is to test all electronic systems that alert Wisconsin citizens for impending severe weather that can result in the loss of life and property. Conducting a live, end-to-end drill accomplishes this goal by tone-alerting watches and warnings on NOAA Weather Radio and broadcasting them through media outlets.

What Can I Expect to Hear/See? The test may look like regular, local EAS tests that most people are already familiar with, but there will be some differences in what viewers will see and hear. The audio message will repeat "This is a test." The video message scroll may not indicate "This is a test" due to programming limitations. The message will last for approximately one minute and then regular programming will resume.

Where Will I Hear/See the Test? On all participating radio, television, cable providers (who are called EAS Participants) and NOAA Weather Radios.

When Will the Test Occur? April 19th at 1:45 PM (central time). That is the same time the test will be conducted in Minnesota as well as Wisconsin.



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Tornado Safety at Home, Work, or at Play

Listen, Act, and Live

- In a home or building, avoid windows. Move to a basement, and get under a sturdy table or the stairs. A specially-constructed "safe room" within a building offers the best protection. Use an internet search engine and search for "safe room" for more information.
- If a basement is not available, move to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and cover yourself with anything close at hand: towels, blankets, pillows. If possible, get under a sturdy table, desk or counter. Put as many walls as possible between you and the storm.
- If caught outdoors, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If you cannot quickly walk to shelter, get into a vehicle, buckle your seatbelt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. Now you have two options as a last resort:
 - Stay in the vehicle with the seatbelt on and place your head below the windows.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the roadway, exit the vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under an overpass.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home and go to the designated storm shelter or the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building.
- At school, follow the drill. Go to the interior hall or room. Crouch low, head down, and protect the back of your head with your arms. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditoriums.



(Joplin Missouri-May 22, 2011 an EF-5 tornado with winds over 200 mph strikes the town about the size of Wausau. 160 people are killed and more than 1000 injured)