



READY RACINE

April 2018

Volume 13, Issue 1

Racine County
Office
of
Emergency Management

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Mission

To assist
the community
in mitigating
known hazards and
in preparing for,
responding to,
surviving and
recovering from
both natural and
man-made
disasters.

Tornado Awareness Week 2018

County Executive Jonathan Delagrave has joined with Governor Scott Walker in declaring April 9-13 as Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week.

Racine County will once again be joining in the statewide Tornado Drills scheduled for Thursday, April 12th. According to David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator, schools, businesses, families, and individuals have two opportunities to test their emergency plans during the April 12th statewide tornado drills.

A mock tornado watch will be issued April 12th at 1 p.m., followed by a statewide mock tornado warning at 1:45 p.m. Many radio and TV stations across the state will issue the test tornado warnings. In addition, mock alerts will be

issued on NOAA Weather. Later, a mock tornado warning will be issued at 6:45 p.m. to give families and second-shift workers a chance to practice their emergency plans.

In Racine County, Outdoor Warning Sirens will be activated in those communities that have them. However, not all communities in Racine County have Outdoor Warning Sirens. In fact, most do not. In addition, Outdoor Warning Sirens are not meant to be heard indoors. Although you may occasionally hear them indoors they were not designed for that purpose.

“Every home, school and business should have a NOAA Weather Radio,” added Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmaling. “They should be as common

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Prepare now for spring

Spring may seem far off, but it is just around the corner. Prepare for possible spring flooding now before it sneaks up on you. Follow these tips from Ready.gov to make sure you, your family and your home are prepared:

- Know your flood risk.
- Familiarize yourself with local emergency plans. Know where to go and how to get there should you need to get to higher ground, the highest level of a building, or to evacuate.
- Make a flood emergency plan for the relevant type/s of local flood risk with plans such as evacuation, shelter, and locations for high ground.
- Build or restock your emergency preparedness kit, including a minimum of 3 days of food and water, flashlight, batteries, cash, prescription medications and first aid supplies.
- Consider buying flood insurance. Homeowners and renters insurance do not typically cover flood damage.
- Stay tuned to your phone alerts, TV, or radio for weather updates, emergency instructions, or evacuation orders.

2017 most expensive on record for natural disasters

Last year, two major hurricanes and several wild fires contributed to the most expensive year on record for natural disasters. Damages totaled more than \$305 billion.

A recent report from S&P Global Ratings warns that a potential shift in federal disaster relief and insurance funds, as well as the potential for increasingly frequent climate-related disasters, “the risks to local governments will likely compound without planning or prevention.”

The agency says governments must manage budget volatility following such events, repair and adapt their key assets to the changing risks, and plan for potential long-term impacts.

This was seen firsthand last summer when flooding in southeastern Wisconsin resulted in millions of dollars in damages to homeowners, businesses and local governments. Most

of the damages were not insured and those affected did not qualify for a FEMA Presidential Disaster Declaration.

While Small Business Administration (SBA) low interest loans were made available to homeowners, renters and businesses, not all affected qualified for that assistance. In addition, local governments impacted had the opportunity to apply for the Wisconsin Disaster Fund but that only provided partial reimbursement.

There is no easy answer but mitigation is one place to start. According to an article published in Homeland Security Today, a new study concluded that for every dollar the government spends to make existing buildings more resistant to wildfires, earthquakes, floods and hurricanes, \$6 is saved in property losses, business interruption and health problems.

The study also found that for every \$1 spent to exceed building codes and make structures more hazard-resistant in the future, \$4 would be saved. In all, over the next 75 years, these measures could prevent 600 deaths, 1 million injuries and 4,000 cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, the report concludes.

Racine County has followed good flood plain management practices but there are still vulnerable areas. In addition, as we see new growth, steps must be taken to ensure that mitigation techniques are integrated into projects. Racine County recently adopted an update to their County Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan provides a blue print to follow.

Hazardous materials reporting and planning

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986 was created to help communities plan for chemical emergencies.

It also requires industry to report on the storage, use and releases of hazardous substances to federal, state, and local governments. EPCRA requires state and local governments, and Indian tribes to use this information to prepare their community from potential risks.

Each year, local companies in Racine County who either meet or exceed the threshold for certain requirements, report those chemicals on a Tier II Form. That information is provided to

WI Emergency Management, the Racine County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the local fire department.

Facilities that use, store or produce one of several hundred chemicals considered Extremely Hazardous must work with the LEPC to develop an off-site facility plan which identifies the chemical(s), vulnerability zones and special facilities like schools and nursing homes which may be impacted.

Common extremely hazardous substances found in Racine County include chlorine, anhydrous ammonia, nitric acid and sulfuric acid.

While chemicals are safely transported and used every day, accidents do occur and we must be prepared. The City of Racine Fire Department is one of five regional hazardous materials teams which responds to chemical spills in southeastern Wisconsin. They routinely train and exercise in order to



Odds & Ends

RCOEM conducts disaster exercises

Racine County Emergency Management facilitated an active shooter tabletop exercise for the Veteran's Center in Union Grove.

The facility wanted to both introduce their plan to staff while also testing it. A tabletop exercise lends itself to a discussion on the scenario and what each person would do in that situation.



The Waterford Graded School District invited David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator, to facilitate a tabletop discussion involving a chemical spill that forced the evacuation of several schools in the district. A discussion was held simultaneously on each

campus.

RCOEM receives grant award

RCOEM received several grants from Wisconsin Emergency Management to conduct disaster exercises. Two exercises have been held and two more are scheduled. The first was a tabletop exercise that looked at how a major blizzard would affect Racine County.

The second tabletop exercise involved a hazardous materials spill on I-94. Businesses in the vicinity of the "spill" were invited to participate. The third exercise will revisit the flooding that occurred last summer and the final exercise will involve the activation of the Emergency Operations Center.

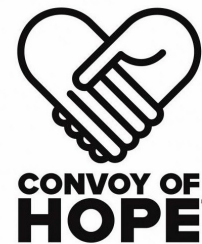


Convoy of Hope

RCOEM attended a kick-off at Journey Church in Kenosha for their new disaster ministry. The church, which has a campus in Burlington, is developing a team to respond to small to medium emergencies and natural disasters in the SE-WI and NE-IL area.

They have partnered with Convoy of Hope, a national disaster relief organization, to provide training, insight and support. Convoy of Hope would provide large scale distribution of food, supplies, and other needed items. They are highly regarded for their scalable distribution model, Disaster Services teams, six international warehouses and a Mobile Command Center.

Journey Church brought Convoy of Hope in last year to distribute items to flood victims.



Weather radios can help save lives

Advanced warning can help save lives and one of the best ways to protect your family in the case of a disaster is by having a NOAA Weather radio. NOAA weather radios are inexpensive, information comes directly from the National Weather Service and they are used to broadcast information on all types of hazards. Broadcasts of tornado warnings, flood warnings, AMBER Alerts for child abductions, chemical spill messages and many other notifi-

cations, in addition to routine weather observations and forecasts, make a NOAA weather radio an essential item for every home, business and public area. Weather radios come in many sizes and with a variety of functions and costs. Many of the radios sound a tone alarm and/or turn on the audio when severe weather announcements or emergency information are broadcast. Most radios are either battery-operated portables or AC-powered

desktop models with battery backup. You can purchase emergency radios for around \$30 at most electronic stores, hardware stores and even neighborhood drug stores. Don't delay, get yours today!



Tornado Awareness Week cont.

as a smoke detector! In addition, sign up for text alerts on your phone and be alert to changing weather conditions. Early alerts can help save lives.”

Racine County Emergency Management recommends that every household and business take the following steps to prepare for tornadoes and severe weather:

- Get a NOAA Weather Radio. Weather radios broadcast official National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When watches and warnings are issued, an alarm goes off.
- Sign up for email and cell phone



text weather alerts.

The Weather Channel is just one of many who offer this free service. In addition, download the Ready Badger app. Ready Badger is an emergency alert app to help citizens of the State of Wisconsin stay up to date on

emergency information and submit damage reports in the event of a disaster.

- Get a Kit. When preparing for a possible emergency, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth.
- Have a plan. Designate shelter areas in the home and workplace. The safest place is generally the basement. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you



and the outside.

- Practice tornado drills at home and work.
- Finally, be informed. Learn all you can about tornadoes and severe weather. Attend our annual Severe Weather Safety and Storm Spotting Seminar. The seminar will be held Tuesday, April 17, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Blvd, Sturtevant. The Training is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required! To pre-register go to <https://2018stormspotter.eventbrite.com>.

STAY INFORMED

There are a number of ways in which you can stay informed and involved with Racine County Emergency Management. In addition to our quarterly Ready Racine newsletters, you can learn more about RCOEM by:

- Visiting our website: <http://readyracineco.com>
- Download the Ready Badger App: <http://appfactoryuwp.com/projects.php>
- Visiting our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/readyracineco
- Submitting your questions and concerns to rcemergencymanagement@racinecounty.com
- Volunteering with Racine County Emergency Management

