

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Racine County Observes Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week
April 17-21, 2017**

(RACINE) County Executive Jonathan Delagrave has joined with Governor Scott Walker in proclaiming Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week April 17-21, 2017.

“As we move through spring, thunderstorms and the threat of tornadoes will become more frequent,” commented County Executive Delagrave. “That means we should all take the time to prepare and that includes knowing what to do when severe weather strikes, having a plan, and getting a NOAA Weather radio for your home and business.”

According to the National Weather Service, Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes annually. Last year, there were 16 tornado touchdowns in the state. All of them were either an EF0 or EF1. While Racine County is a relatively safe place to live, work and play, Racine County has recorded 26 tornadoes since 1844. The worst was the May 18th, 1883 tornado which hit the north side of the City of Racine. This tornado is still listed as one of Wisconsin’s Top Ten Killer Tornadoes, killing 25 people and injuring over 100.

“Citizens were probably caught off-guard by this tornado,” commented David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator. “Warning systems were nonexistent back then but today we have radio, TV, cell phones, text alerts, Wireless Emergency Alerts, NOAA Weather Radios and outdoor warning sirens. Advance warning does save lives if warnings are heeded.”

Racine County residents will have the opportunity to practice their tornado plan on April 20th. That afternoon, a mock tornado watch will be issued at 1:00 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 Radios. 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 David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator. “They should be as common as a smoke detector! In addition, sign up for text alerts on your phone and be alert to changing weather conditions.”

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

1. 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.
2. 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 ReadyBadger app at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.appfactoryuwp.readybadger&hl=en> or from the Apple Store. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Practice tornado drills at home and work.
6. 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 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 25th, at iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Blvd, Sturtevant. Training is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required! To pre-register go to www.racinestormspotter.eventbrite.com.

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