



City of Ramsey Emergency Management



Severe Weather Awareness Week

Minnesota Severe Weather Awareness Week is April 8 - 12, 2019

Monday- Alerts and Warnings

We are fortunate to live in an age and country where our technology can now communicate with us almost anywhere and give us advanced warnings of impending hazards or other important information.

Knowing where and how you can receive the warnings and what to do when you get them can mean the difference between life and death.

Wireless Emergency Alerts:

In weather emergencies, warnings can save lives. But traditional warning methods such as television, radio and outdoor sirens don't always reach everyone.

Emergency officials now have a new way to send warnings directly to cell phones in affected areas — Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs).

These short messages may look like a text message, but unlike texts, which are sent directly to your phone number, these warnings will be broadcast to all phones within range of designated cell towers.

The alerts will tell you the type of warning, the affected area, and the duration. You'll need to turn to other sources, such as television or your NOAA All-Hazards radio, to get more detailed information about what is happening and what actions you should take.

Key Things to Know

- WEA messages may look like a text, or appear over your home screen.
- The alert message will include a unique ringtone and vibration.
- You will never be charged for WEA messages.
- Emergency alerts will not interrupt any calls or downloads in progress. If you're on the phone when the alert goes out, you'll get the message when you end your call.
- You need not have GPS or any other special features turned on to receive the alerts.
- The system does not identify your location or phone number – it simply sends the message to all devices in a given area.
- If you're on the road and enter an area with an active warning, you'll receive a WEA message as soon as you come within range of one of the affected cell towers.

Three types of emergency alerts

- **PRESIDENTIAL ALERTS:** Issued by the U.S. President in the event of a nationwide emergency.
- **IMMINENT THREAT ALERTS:** Typically issued by the National Weather Service; tornado, flash flood and blizzard warnings are some of the warnings that will initially be sent by the NWS.
- **AMBER ALERTS:** Issued by the BCA; they will share information about a child abduction. No president has ever yet had to issue a presidential alert, but should one become necessary, cell phone providers are required to broadcast it to all WEA-capable phones.

Siren Activation Information:

Warning sirens are the most effective method of warning the population at large about dangerous conditions. However, one common misconception about warning sirens is that they will alert the public to dangerous conditions while indoors. While some people may live close enough to hear the sirens indoors, this is not the intended purpose. The sirens are designed to advise people who are outside that a hazardous condition exists or is approaching. When the sirens are heard, go inside and tune to local media to get more information.

Our warning sirens are connected to the Metro Warning System, which allows the sirens to be set off by either the State of Minnesota warning point or the Anoka County warning point in Anoka. The sirens are operated by a radio tone device that allows flexibility in setting them off for certain regions of the county, certain municipalities within the county, or even a specific siren within any municipality. For severe weather warnings, outdoor warning siren activation in Ramsey is based on the following criteria:

- When a Tornado Warning has been issued for the City of Ramsey
- When a public safety officer (police, fire or EMS) reports sighting a funnel cloud or tornado
- Sustained straight line winds in excess of 75 mph or potential for same

NOTE: There is no such thing as an "all-clear" siren.

Types of Warnings:

The National Weather Service uses the words "advisory", "watch" and "warning" to alert you to potentially dangerous weather. Understanding these terms and knowing how to react can be a life saver.

Advisory

An advisory is issued when a hazardous weather event is occurring, imminent or likely. Advisories are for less serious conditions than warnings that cause significant inconvenience and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.

Watch

A watch means weather conditions are favorable for dangerous weather to occur. In other words, a "watch" means watch out for what the weather could do, and be ready to act accordingly. For events that come and go quickly, such as severe thunderstorms, tornadoes or flash floods, a watch means that the odds are good for the dangerous weather, but it's not yet happening.

When a severe thunderstorm, tornado or flash flood watch is in effect, it means you should look for signs of dangerous weather and maintain access to the latest information. Sometimes a severe thunderstorm, tornado or flash flood can happen so quickly that warnings can't be issued in time.

A winter storm watch means it's time to prepare by stocking up on emergency supplies and making sure you know what to do if a warning is issued.

Warnings

For severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash floods, a warning means the weather event is imminent or occurring somewhere in the defined warning area and that people need to take shelter as soon as possible.

Outdoor tornado warnings are normally given by sirens. People indoors should listen to radios, TV or Weather Radio warnings to find out the latest information. A winter storm warning means it's not safe to travel or venture outside. If traveling, head for the nearest shelter.