

Tornadoes can be one of nature's most violent storms and are most common in the Midwest. They can appear suddenly with little warning and can be invisible until dust and debris are picked up or a funnel cloud appears. In Evansville, we have three Emergency warning sirens that are designed to warn residents when a tornado has been spotted and you should take cover.

The tornado Warning Signal is a steady tone of 3-5 minutes and is the take cover signal that a tornado warning has been issued for Rock County and citizens should immediately take shelter and tune to your local broadcasting stations or weather radio for further information. Rock County sirens when sounded are set-off county-wide.

Keep in mind, there is **no** all clear+siren. Many people think that when the siren blows twice, the second time is the all clear.+**This is NOT the case.** If an emergency warning siren blows, take cover immediately. The only exception is from April to October; a TEST SIGNAL will blow for 1-2 minutes long and will be performed only on the first Wednesday of every month at 12:05 p.m. If there is impending bad weather on these test days, the sirens will NOT be tested.

Any time a siren blows, residents should take cover and listen to a radio (preferably a NOAA weather radio and/or the television). Residents should not call the 911 Center, the Police Department or the Rock County Office of Emergency Management. As mentioned above, a NOAA weather radio is the best source of information during inclement weather.

A NOAA weather radio is a smoke detector for severe weather and hazardous conditions.+Every family and business should have one. A NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards with an alarm and battery back-up is one of the best ways to protect your family. The alarm feature can wake you up during severe weather and give you and your family time to seek appropriate shelter. A NOAA Weather Radio is a 24-hour source of weather forecasts, watches, warnings, and non-weather emergency information provided by the National Weather Service. If there is no severe weather then your weather radio can be switched to a silent, stand-by mode. A weather radio with S.A.M.E. technology allows you to program your radio to alarm only for hazardous conditions that affect your county. You can purchase a NOAA weather radio at most electronic stores. Weather radios come in many sizes, with a variety of functions and costs. Most weather radio receivers are either battery-operated portables or AC-powered desktop models with battery backup. The portable weather radios are an important item to take along when you're enjoying the outdoors such as camping and boating. Look for Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology that allows you to program your radio to alarm only for hazardous conditions that affect your county.

Some additional information related to severe weather:

Watches & Warnings:

TORNADO WATCH: Conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.

TORNADO WARNING: A tornado is imminent (based on weather radar information) or has been sighted by spotters. If a tornado warning is issued for your area - move to your pre-designated place of safety. **SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!**

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH: Conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms with damaging straight-line (downburst) winds and/or large hail.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING: Severe thunderstorms with damaging straight-line winds and/or large hail are imminent or are occurring.

Where to Go In Severe Weather:

In a house with a basement: Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under some kind of sturdy protection (heavy table, work bench or stairs), or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag.

In a house with no basement, a dorm, or an apartment: Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down; and cover your head with your hands. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding (mattress, blankets, etc.), to protect against flying or falling debris.

In an office building: Go directly to an enclosed, windowless area in the center of the building -- away from glass. Then, crouch down and cover your head. Interior stairwells are usually good places to take shelter. Stay off elevators - you could become trapped in them if the power is lost.

In a mobile home: Get out! Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes. If your community has a tornado shelter, go there fast. If there is a sturdy permanent building within close distance, seek shelter there. Otherwise, lie flat on low ground away from your home, protecting your head. If possible, use open ground away from trees and cars, which can be blown onto you.

At school: Follow the drill! Go to the interior hall or room in an orderly way as you are told. 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.

In a car or truck: Get out of the vehicle immediately and seek shelter in a permanent building. Do not try to out run a tornado. If there is no shelter, lie flat and face down, protecting the back of your head with your arms.

For additional information related to this topic, you can visit the following web-sites:

READY WISCONSIN

<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/ReadyWI/Informed/Tornadoes.asp>

READY.GOV

<http://www.ready.gov/>

RED CROSS:

<http://www.redcross.org/>

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/index.shtm>

NATIONAL OCEANIC and ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISWTRATION

<http://www.noaawatch.gov/>

Information from this article was provided by the Rock County Office of Emergency Management and the following web-sites:

<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/ReadyWI/Informed/Tornadoes.asp> and

<http://www.ready.gov/>

This information is also available on the Evansville Police Department Web page at: <http://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/city/services/police.html>