

OUTDOOR PUBLIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS) Common Guidance for Testing and Activation

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish common guidelines for activation of outdoor warning sirens throughout Linn County.

The outdoor warning sirens represent only one part of a broader public emergency notification system. Other components might include: NOAA Weather Radio All-hazards, law enforcement, text notification networks, and the media. Sirens are used to promote situational awareness by alerting citizens who are outdoors of

This document is not intended to relieve, replace, or supersede any authority or responsibility local jurisdictions might have to protect the citizens of their

Background

Confusion hinders public response. Using common guidelines for the outdoor warning sirens throughout the various jurisdictions of Linn County will minimize confusion in emergency situations. Establishing common guidelines will also enable communities to partner in an area-wide public education campaign regarding sirens and the overall public emergency notification system.

These guidelines are based on communication technology and systems available in Linn County, and also on the current science of severe weather warnings.

Siren Activation for Imminent Threats

Upon hearing outdoor warning sirens it is important that all persons immediately refer to local broadcast media (radio, TV, etc.) for additional information!

When activated, the tone should be sounded for 3-5 minutes, re-sounding for the duration of the threat (every 10-15 minutes is recommended). Repeated sounding

sirens have more _____ tone, local officials should pre-determine the tone that is most discernible and use that tone for all alerts.

National Weather Service warnings define the area threatened by the storm and include information about the history and/or potential of the _____

_____ in

Tornadoes – Activation recommended for:

- Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service or
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by a trained spotter

Severe Thunderstorms – Activation recommended for:

- Severe Thunderstorm Warning issued by the National Weather Service or a report from a trained spotter that includes:
- wind 70 mph* or greater, or
- golf ball sized hail** or larger

** Most fatalities during tornadoes or severe thunderstorms occur due to falling trees*

_____ in

www.spc.ncep.noaa.gov/etfscale)

*** Hail begins to break windows when it reaches or exceeds golf ball size.*

Additional considerations:

Although other weather factors pose a risk, community-wide outdoor warning sirens should NOT be sounded for lightning or flash floods. By its nature, lightning is “self-alerting” and citizens should go indoors when thunder is heard. Also, because of the frequency of lightning, sounding sirens could desensitize the public to the

Local Life-threatening Events

Non-weather emergencies (hazmat incident, terrorism, nuclear emergency, etc.) that pose a threat to those outdoors and require action to protect life, should be alerted via the outdoor warning sirens by local officials based on existing agreements or local discretion depending on the emergency. If outdoor warning

[REDACTED]

monitor

Testing

Outdoor warning sirens will be tested the first Wednesday of each month at 8:45 a.m. Mount Vernon tests [REDACTED] 8:45 AM.

If a severe weather watch or warning is in effect for Linn County prior to 8:45 a.m. on a scheduled test day, the sirens should not be tested that day. Outdoor warning siren tests will resume on the next scheduled monthly date.

Linn County Area

Outdoor Public Notification Warning Sirens

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) & Fire Department Quick Reference Guide for Activation and Testing

Sirens should be sounded for 3-5 minutes, resounding for the duration of the threat (every 10-15 minutes is recommended).

Severe Weather

Tornadoes

- Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service and/or
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by a trained spotter

Severe Thunderstorms

- Severe Thunderstorm Warning issued by the National Weather Service or report received from a trained spotter that includes:
 - wind 70 mph or greater, or
 - golf ball sized hail or larger

Local Life-threatening Events

Non-weather emergencies (hazmat incident, terrorism, nuclear emergency, etc.) that pose a threat to those outdoors and require action to protect life, should be alerted via the outdoor warning sirens by local officials based on existing agreements or local discretion depending on the emergency.

All Clear

There will be no "all clear" signal from outdoor warning sirens.

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Mount Vernon Siren Messages

Message #1(A): weather warning, winter weather warning

Message #2(B): "Severe weather warning. shelter immediately
Severe weather warning. Seek shelter immediately." (26 seconds)

Message #3(C): "Tornado warning. A tornado warning has been
issued for this area. Tornado warning. A tornado warning has been
issued for this area." (24 seconds)

Message #4(D): thunderstorm warning. A severe thunderstorm
warning has been issued for this area. severe
warning." (19 seconds)

Message #5(E): "Attention the following is regular test of the outdoor
warning system. This is not an emergency, ~~this is~~ a test." (6
seconds)

Message #6(F): "This has been test the emergency warning
system. This was only a test." (3 seconds)

Message #7(G): "All clear, the emergency is over. All clear, the
emergency is over. All clear, the emergency is over." (23 seconds)