

PRESS RELEASE...

SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK
MARCH 25, 2007 – MARCH 31, 2007

STATEWIDE TORNADO SIREN TEST AND EAS ACTIVATION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2007 @ 9:50AM

The State of Ohio will participate in two events that are focused to increase the knowledge of preparing for and recovering from severe weather, and to test warning systems. Governor Strickland has proclaimed March 25-31, 2007 as the Spring Severe Weather Safety Awareness Week.

This week can be the opportunity to create a disaster preparedness plan for the home, school or business. On Wednesday, March 28, Ohio counties will sound their warning systems at 9:50 a.m. for the statewide tornado drill.

Schools and businesses are encouraged to participate at that time and practice their tornado drills.

Severe/Hazardous Weather Terms

Warning - A product issued by National Weather Service local offices indicating that a particular weather hazard is either imminent or occurring. A warning indicates the need to take action to protect life and property. Typical warnings include:

- *Tornado Warning*
- *Severe Thunderstorm Warning*
- *Flash Flood/Flood Warning*
- *Excessive Heat Warning*

Watch - A NWS product indicating that conditions are favorable for the development of a particular severe weather event. A watch is normally issued for several hours and indicates a need for planning, preparation and an increased awareness of changing weather conditions. Typical watches include:

- *Tornado Watch*
- *Severe Thunderstorm Watch*
- *Flood Watch*

Cold Air Funnels: Weak funnel cloud extensions from cumulus clouds that typically remain aloft. Cold air funnels form in cold unstable air masses and are not usually associated with thunderstorms or severe weather.

Downburst: Intense gust of wind or downdraft that exits the base of a thunderstorm and spreads out horizontally at the earth's surface as a strong wind which often causes damage.

Flash Flood: A flood that can occur very rapidly. Flash floods occur as the result of very heavy rainfall in a short period of time, generally over a relatively small area.

Flood: The condition that occurs when water overflows the natural or artificial confines of a stream or body of water, or accumulates by drainage over low lying areas.

Funnel Cloud: Violently rotating column of air that is not in contact with the ground. A tornado passes through the funnel cloud stage during its development and dissipation.

Gust Front: The leading edge of a mass of cool, gusty air that flows from the base of a thunderstorm and spreads along the ground in advance of the thunderstorm.

Lightning: Generally, any and all of the various forms of electrical discharge produced by thunderstorms.

Severe Thunderstorm: A thunderstorm producing a tornado, damaging winds of 58 mph or higher, and/or hail 3/4-inch in diameter or larger.

Squall Line: Any line or narrow band of thunderstorms. These lines may be of considerable length, extending across multiple states.

Straight-Line Winds: Thunderstorm winds that may produce damage which typically exhibits a lack of a rotational damage pattern. Straight-line winds are most often produced by a thunderstorm gust front, originating from a downburst.

Thunderstorm: In general, a local storm produced by a cumulonimbus cloud, and accompanied by lightning and thunder, usually with strong wind gusts, heavy rain and sometimes hail. A cumulonimbus cloud is a cauliflower-shaped cloud that has a height taller than or equal to its width.

Tornado: A violently rotating column of air that comes in contact with the ground, many times, descending from the base of a severe thunderstorm. Tornadoes are usually funnel shaped, with the narrow end nearest the ground. In Ohio, most tornadoes are obscured by hills, trees and rain until they are upon you.

Emergency Preparedness Plans & Disaster Kits

1. Have a family meeting. Involve everyone in the household in the preparation of a disaster plan. Discuss the types of disasters that can affect you and your home. Ensure that everyone knows the difference between weather watches and warnings. Write down solutions for each kind of emergency. Plan how to care for your pets following a disaster.

2. Develop a family escape and/or shelter plan.

Draw an overhead floor plan view of your home. Determine two escape routes per room. Teach children how to open windows and screens. Pick a meeting place outside of the home (a large tree or neighbor's yard) in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Determine where to shelter during a tornado (in a basement, centralized closet or bathroom).

3. Practice your plan. Even the best plan is ineffective unless it has been practiced. Conduct fire drills. Activate smoke detectors when the household is asleep. Conduct tornado drills. Practice how to protect yourself and others during severe storms.

4. Organize your disaster preparedness kit. No matter the incident, your kit should have enough supplies to sustain every member of your household for three days.

For the home: NOAA weather radio, flashlight, batteries, nonperishable foods, bottled water and juices, manual can opener, first aid kit, prescription drugs, sleeping bags, important family documents, cash/ credit cards, important phone numbers.

For the car: fire extinguisher, tools, first aid kit, sleeping bags or blankets, bottled water, high-energy snacks, flashlight, batteries, battery operated radio, cell phone, cash/credit cards.

Commercially prepared disaster kits are available at select discount, hardware and military surplus stores or can be purchased via the Internet.

For more information visit: www.nilesema.com