



SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK

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April 12 - 16, 2021 Statewide Tornado Drill Day is April 15

This annual public education event is designed to remind individuals, families, businesses, schools, and institutions that it's essential to plan ahead for Minnesota's severe spring and summer weather. An informed, involved community is more resilient to disaster. Being prepared helps reduce the risks and costs of hazardous weather events.

An easy way to get prepared is to participate in the statewide tornado drills on **Thursday, April 15 at 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m.** They will provide an excellent opportunity for citizens to prepare their homes, families, neighborhoods and communities!

Each day of the week focuses on a different topic.

- **Monday:** Alerts and Warnings
- **Tuesday:** Severe Weather, Lightning and Hail
- **Wednesday:** Floods
- **Thursday:** Tornadoes (with statewide tornado drills)
- **Friday:** Extreme Heat

Prepare Your Family

- Create or update emergency plans with your entire family so everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Ensure everyone has up-to-date contact info and knows what to do.
- Practice your family plan during the tornado drills on April 16. Have everyone build a family emergency kit together.
- Check with places your family spends time, such as schools, workplaces, churches, markets, or sports facilities to learn what their emergency plans are.
- Share the plans for these areas with your entire family and talk about what you would do if your family was not together during a disaster.

Prepare Your Neighborhood

- Help prepare your neighborhood by asking, "What's your plan?" Make sure your plans are compatible. Find out who has special needs and might need help in an emergency.
- Plan with your neighborhood. Ask your homeowners association, your tenants group or neighborhood association to make emergency preparedness an agenda item during your next meeting. Make sure there is an evacuation plan for your neighborhood.
- Host a neighborhood preparedness meeting. Invite your local emergency manager to help lead the discussions.

Prepare Your Community

- Include preparedness activities at community events. Consider local events already scheduled in your community, such as state or county fairs, festivals, parades, or sporting events.
- Encourage local governments and civic groups to help. Ask local scouts, Lions, chambers of commerce, etc., to distribute emergency preparedness information, recruit volunteers, and discuss preparedness plans within your community.
- Host a local preparedness fair. Reach out to prominent organizations in your community, such as faith-based and community organizations, businesses, and schools to help coordinate a preparedness fair.
- Find out how to create or participate in a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).



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Prepare Your Workplace

- Update and distribute emergency contact information to employees. Create and distribute a list of important emergency numbers. Designate critical function or emergency personnel.
- Organize an emergency preparedness procedures review with employees to review your company's emergency plans. Ensure everyone understands their roles in a "what if?" scenario.
- Host a disaster preparedness brown bag lunch for employees. Invite emergency managers to give a disaster preparedness briefing.
- Get a NOAA Weather Radio and put it on display in your break room or other high-traffic locations. Encourage employees to get their own for their homes as well.
- Send a copy of the facility emergency plan to employees have group meetings to review it.
- Showcase instructional videos or distribute preparedness information. Provide information online about training opportunities.
- Contact a local business continuity or emergency management professional. Work with company leadership to create or update disaster and continuity plans.
- Conduct office evacuation and shelter-in-place exercises and drills. Schedule an emergency exercise or drill. Once completed, evaluate and decide if new procedures or training are needed. Consult with local responders or emergency managers to participate, observe or advise.
- Distribute emergency preparedness messages. Include emergency preparedness messages in communication touch points such as e-mails, newsletters and social media.

Prepare Your School

The tornado drill on April 15 is at 1:45 p.m. is a perfect opportunity for schools to conduct preparedness training, exercises and education. A carefully developed tornado drill should keep students and staff in good practice and work out any problems before a real event occurs.

- Large and easy-to-read maps or signs with arrows should be posted throughout the hallways directing people to the safe areas.
- If the school's alarm system relies on electricity, have a compressed-air horn or megaphone or other backup device to sound the alert in case of power failure.
- Make special provisions to evacuate and shelter students in portable classrooms.
- Plan and exercise procedures for any functional needs students to ensure mobility in an evacuation.
- Make sure several staff members are trained in how to turn off electricity and gas.
- Communicate the school emergency plan with parents and families. Explain the policy for keeping children at school beyond regular hours if threatening weather is expected.
- Educate the faculty and students about policies and warnings for severe weather.
- Establish and communicate the severe weather policy for sports or special events. Plan for gymnasiums, theaters and lunch rooms to be evacuated in an emergency.
- Know the county in which your school sits and keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins. Online maps and weather sources can be valuable, but if the power is out, it helps to have paper maps.
- Make sure the school's NOAA Weather Radio is operating (with batteries) and can be heard. Know what the different warnings mean. Make sure the radio is properly programmed.
- Establish and practice the in-school emergency communications plan to ensure that all teachers, classes and staff are informed of any emergency -including athletic fields or playgrounds.

More information about these emergency preparedness steps is provided on the [FEMA Ready.gov](http://FEMAReady.gov), [HSEM Weather Safety](http://HSEMWeatherSafety) and [National Weather Service](http://NationalWeatherService) websites.