

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RALEIGH NC
800 AM EDT FRI MAR 04 2011

SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 05

This week has been declared North Carolina's Severe Weather Awareness Week for 2011.

The Alert Process:

The Raleigh National Weather Service along with emergency officials, the American Red Cross, and local media all work together preparing communities for the next natural disaster. The mission of the National Weather Service is to protect life and property. However it is how you prepare for and respond to severe weather which really saves lives. Make sure that you know what to do once a warning is issued and severe weather threatens. Understanding the difference between a watch and warning and receiving this information are important factors in protecting yourself.

Severe weather watches:

When widespread severe weather is possible across North Carolina, the National Weather Service will issue a watch. Watches are issued for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and floods. A watch provides you a heads up, making you aware that severe weather is possible or even expected in the near future. As storms develop, they could become life threatening and damaging. Watches are intended to raise situational awareness allowing you time to prepare.

When a Watch is issued, remain alert to approaching storms. Watches are transmitted via NOAA weather radio, local television and many Internet as well as wireless applications.

Severe weather warning:

When severe weather is imminent or already occurring, the National Weather Service will issue a warning! Warnings indicate an immediate threat to property some times even life. When warnings are issued you should have a high awareness of the danger and enact your safety plan if threatened.

When warnings are issued for your area, you should stay away from windows and seek shelter in the middle of your home on the lowest floor as storms threaten. All warnings should be taken seriously. If you are caught outside camping, golfing, boating or participating in other activities which limit the availability of shelter, you are especially at risk. Be sure that you know how to protect yourself.

Receiving warning information:

Warnings are transmitted via NOAA weather radio as well as by local television stations. Local television stations are the front lines for dissemination of National Weather Service warnings. Most residents in North Carolina receive warning information from the National Weather Service through local television and radio. Today's advancing technology also allows you to receive weather alerts over wireless devices such as cell phones. With the expansion of text messaging and smartphones, many warning services and weather feeds are available from a number of companies in the public and private sector for little to no cost. Staying plugged in to weather for your area is becoming easier and easier.

Before the storm:

Preparing before the storm is very important. Have a NOAA weather radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup in your home. A weather radio will alert you to the threat of severe weather in your county day or night.

Develop a safety plan and share it with your entire family. Schools should have a written plan in place and practice that plan at least twice a year.

Staying informed about severe weather and making sure that you know what to do when severe weather threatens will keep you and your family safe. The actions you take just moments before a tornado or severe thunderstorm hits can save your life.

You can prepare for severe weather and disasters by planning ahead, creating a disaster supply kit, and learning the safest places to seek shelter when at home, work, school, or outdoors. You should take time to understand basic weather terms and the danger signs related to severe weather and know how to respond. Severe weather can strike in an instant. Your chances of staying safe are greater if you have a plan and practice your plan. When individuals and communities prepare for disasters...lives are saved.

NOAA weather radio:

NOAA weather radio remains one of the best ways to receive warnings at night. NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NOAA weather radio broadcasts official weather service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Known as the "voice of NOAA's National Weather Service," NOAA weather radio is provided as a public service. In North Carolina nearly 30 NOAA weather radio broadcast stations provide weather forecast and warning information for all 100 counties. No matter where you live there is a NOAA weather radio station nearby.

NOAA weather radio will alert you 24 hours a day to the following weather hazards in your county: tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flash floods, river floods and winter storms. Broadcasts are found in the VHF public service band on seven frequencies ranging from

162.400 MHz to 162.550 mhz. These special receivers range in price from \$20 to \$65, through most radios cost less than \$40. The weather radios round-the-clock protection can be a life-saving investment and they can be found in most electronic stores and on many popular websites. When purchasing a NOAA weather radio consumers are recommended to buy a radio with the S.A.M.E. (Specific Area Message Encoded) technology. The S.A.M.E. technology allows the user to program specific counties into the radio such that it only receives alerts for the desired county or counties. This greatly reduces the number of alerts received.

For residents to be as safe as possible, NOAA weather radio needs to become as common in homes, schools, businesses and public places as smoke detectors.

For more information on NOAA weather radio please visit the following website...<http://weather.gov/nwr>

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Related websites:

NWS Weather/Warnings on the web: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/jetstream/webweather/wxhazards.htm>

NWS Warning Service for partners: <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov>

NWS Warnings in XML/CAP: <http://www.weather.gov/alerts-beta/> or <http://www.weather.gov/alerts/>