

READYWISCONSIN PRESS RELEASE: Wisconsin's Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week is April 12-16

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Contact: Andrew Beckett – andrew.beckett@wisconsin.gov – (608) 242-3211

MADISON, Wis. – Gov. Tony Evers has declared April 12-16 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin, and ReadyWisconsin wants everyone to take time to talk about weather safety with their families. ReadyWisconsin, the National Weather Service (NWS), Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, and Wisconsin Emergency Alert System Committee also encourage everyone in the state to participate in statewide tornado drills on April 15.

“Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are a frequent weather threat across the state each year, and it’s important that people know what to do when the skies darken and warnings are issued,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “During the statewide tornado drill, we ask everyone to practice their plan by going to their emergency shelter location.”

Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes annually. During the 2020 season, the NWS confirmed 20 tornadoes touched down in the state. While spring and summer are the most active time of the year for tornadoes, they can happen in any month.

To stay safe from severe weather, ReadyWisconsin encourages people to do the following:

- Create an emergency plan and practice it. Know where designated shelters are located at home, work, and school, and be ready to go there when a tornado warning is issued.
- Have multiple ways to receive alerts about approaching severe weather. Outdoor warning sirens, a NOAA Weather Radio, local media, and smart phone apps are all important tools. Don’t rely on any single source for important life-saving alerts.
- If you have a mobile device, make sure it is enabled to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts. On many devices, that option is available in the settings menu.
- Keep up to date on the daily forecast for your area. It can help ensure you are ready for potential severe weather threats.
- Create an emergency kit for your home, with supplies such as food, water, a flashlight, and first aid kit. Find tips for building a kit at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>

On April 15, Wisconsin will once again conduct its annual statewide tornado drill. At 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m., everyone is encouraged to pause what they are doing and practice going to their designated shelter location. If there is severe weather expected anywhere in the state on April 15, the drill would be postponed to April 16. If you are unable to participate at those times or need to stagger practices due to concerns about COVID-19, ReadyWisconsin encourages everyone to make time on the date of the drill to practice your plan.

“While the statewide drills provide a coordinated time to practice what they should do during a tornado, the most important thing people can do is exercise their plan when they can safely do so,” said Dr. Williams. “Even if you have to participate in a drill earlier or later in the day, we want everyone to spend a few minutes going over what they should be doing in the event a tornado warning is issued for their area.”

One change people may notice this year is the drill will not include a mock tornado warning issued as a live code test of the Emergency Alert System. As a result, there will be no test alerts sounded on NOAA Weather

Radios. While some television and radio stations may break into coverage or display information on screen during the drill times, many may choose to address the drill during their regular local news programming instead.

Some communities may still choose to test their outdoor warning sirens during the drill times. However, it is expected many will instead rely on their regular testing schedules to ensure those devices are working properly.

In place of those alerts, you can expect to see messages from ReadyWisconsin and its partners across social media at 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. that encourage everyone to participate in the drill. ReadyWisconsin also encourages people to add the drill times to their calendar to remind them to practice their plans on April 15. Share how you're participating by using the hashtag **#TornadoDrillWI** on social media.

“While many of the alarms people are used to hearing during the statewide drill may not sound this year, everyone can rest assured that those systems are still being regularly tested in other ways throughout the year,” Williams said. “They can have confidence that they will be ready to notify people about danger when they are needed.”

Gov. Evers' Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week proclamation is [available here](#).

To view the full ReadyWisconsin 2021 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week packet, visit https://readywisconsin.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/TSAW_2021_Media_Packet.pdf

For more tips on severe weather preparedness and advice on creating your own emergency plan, visit <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (<https://facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin>) for tips on emergency preparedness throughout the year!