



State of Wisconsin

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
Wisconsin Emergency Management

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INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE MEMO

3-01-03

DATE: March 3, 2003

TO: County Emergency Management Directors
County Sheriffs
State Patrol PCO Supervisors

FROM: Edward J. Gleason
Administrator

SUBJECT: 2003 TORNADO & SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK
DRILL INFORMATION AND WARNING PROCEDURES

April 7-11 has been declared as Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin. The statewide tornado drill has been scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2003. This drill is a great opportunity for you and your communities to review and discuss your emergency operations plans and warning policies.

The drill will be run in the afternoon. The "test" tornado watch will be issued at 1:15 p.m. The "test" tornado warning will follow at 1:45 p.m. The test will then conclude at 2:00 p.m.; however, no "all clear" message will be sent.

If severe weather should be present in the state on the day of the drill, the test watch and warning will be postponed until Friday, April 11. If severe weather is forecast for Friday, the drill will be canceled.

Last year's drill had to be postponed until Friday because of severe weather that spanned the entire state, producing six tornadoes. On the morning of the drill, if severe weather is forecast for any portion of the state, the National Weather Service will notify Wisconsin Emergency Management and a decision will be made as to whether the drill will be run, postponed or canceled.

The test tornado messages will be transmitted through the Wisconsin portion of the National Warning System (NAWAS), with relay to non-NAWAS counties from either State Patrol Districts or neighboring warning centers. Attached is a NAWAS coverage map. The NAWAS is the *primary* communication tool in issuing urgent severe weather messages in Wisconsin. Counties with direct NAWAS drops should make certain their terminals are functioning properly.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio network will also be activated for these drills. Attached is a NOAA Weather Radio Network Map showing the layout of the NOAA weather radio transmitters and the approximate coverage area in Wisconsin. Alternative weather information is provided by NOAA on the following internet site. This site has six pages of commercial weather vendors offering an endless supply of weather information.

<http://tgsv5.nws.noaa.gov/im/more.htm>

The National Weather Service has five offices with coverage areas in Wisconsin. The NWS also provides live radar coverage on the internet at:

<http://weather.noaa.gov/radar/national.html>

On the local level, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) handles severe weather messages. Broadcasters and cable providers are only required to carry national EAS messages. Local EAS messages, such as severe weather, are at the discretion of the broadcasters and cable providers. Many broadcasters take their severe weather messages directly from the NOAA weather radio network.

Wisconsin Emergency Management will also have information about Tornado Awareness Week available on the internet at:

<http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov>

We urge you to use this year's tornado drill to review your plans, procedures, and equipment for the upcoming severe weather season. If you have any questions regarding Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week, please contact your Regional Emergency Management Director.

Enclosures

DISTRIBUTION:

MG Albert H. Wilkening, TAG
Stan Davis, Governor's Legal Counsel
Randy Thiel, Department of Public Instruction
Barb Fonkert, Minnesota Division of Emergency Management
Rusty Kapela, National Weather Service Office – Sullivan
National Weather Service District Offices
John Gifford, DOT – State Patrol HFSOB
Chris Kalina, DOJ TIME Network
Phil Hanson, Badger Chapter, American Red Cross
Wisconsin Emergency Management Staff

*Previous Information and Guidance Memo: 2-01-03, Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week coordination with Schools