

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RALEIGH NC
800 AM EDT FRI MAR 06 2009

SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN NORTH CAROLINA
MARCH 01 - 07, 2009

This week has been declared North Carolina's Severe Weather Awareness week for 2009. Today's topic will be the severe weather alert process.

The Raleigh National Weather Service along with emergency management 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 the life and property of everyone in North Carolina. It is how you prepare for respond to these warnings which really matters. Make sure that you know what to do once the alarm is sounded. Understanding the difference between a Watch and Warning is an important factor in understanding how to react and protect yourself.

Severe weather watches:

When 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 alerting you that severe weather is forecast. As storms develop, they could become life threatening and damaging. Watches are intended to raise situational awareness and allow you time to prepare.

When a watch is issued remain alert for possible bad weather approaching. Watches are transmitted via NOAA weather radio as well as local television stations.

Severe weather warning:

Once 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 or are a boater on the water, you are especially at risk. Be sure that you know how to protect yourself.

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 technology also allows you to receive many types of weather alerts over wireless devices such as cell phones. Such services are provided by many companies in the public and private sector.

Before the storm:

Preparing before the storm is the most 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 365 days a year.

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 that tornado or severe thunderstorm hits can really 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 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 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.

NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal. Broadcasts are found in the VHF public service band on these 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 radio's round-the-clock protection can be a life-saving investment and

they can be found in most electronic stores and on many popular. 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 America to be as safe as possible, NOAA Weather Radio needs to become as common in homes, schools, businesses and public places as smoke detectors.

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