



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MUSCOM TO PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILL

Severe Weather Awareness Week March 21-25; outdoor siren to sound during drill

MUSCATINE, Iowa - The Muscatine County Joint Communications Center (MUSCOM) will start the yearly testing of the Outdoor Sirens on Monday, April 4, 2022. The sirens are tested on the first Monday of every month at 11 a.m. during non-freezing months, however, if there is severe weather forecast for a testing day, the sirens will not be tested.



The county will also be participating in the Statewide Tornado Drill to be held in conjunction with Severe Weather Awareness Week. The Drill will be held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 23. The sirens will also be activated in conjunction with this drill. For more information you can visit the National Weather Service Site at <https://www.weather.gov/dvn/>.

"The Statewide Drill gives businesses, schools, daycares and other facilities the chance to practice their severe weather procedures as we move into storm season. I encourage all facilities in the county to participate in the drill" said Chris Jasper, Director – Emergency Management/911.



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Just as a reminder to all citizens, during a severe weather event, the sirens are activated by MUSCOM when one of the following criteria is met:

- Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by a trained weather spotter
- Severe thunderstorm Warning issued by the National Weather Service or a report from a trained weather spotter that includes:
 - Wind 70mph or greater and/or
 - Golf ball sized hail or larger

According to information from the NWS most fatalities during tornadoes or severe thunderstorms occur due to falling trees or large branches. 70 mph wind is the typical threshold at which large branches and small trees break. Hail also begins to break windows when it reaches or exceeds golf ball sized hail.

"Muscatine County follows the guidelines that are set out by the National Weather Service. Due to the possibility of extreme danger from falling trees and branches we will continue to activate the siren system for Severe Thunderstorm Warnings that meet that threshold," said Jasper.

Sirens are designed to alert citizens who are outdoors of an imminent hazard and prompt them to go indoors and seek further information.

"We encourage the public to tune into local media outlets or listen to a weather radio during severe weather and ask that they limit the use of 911 to emergencies only," Jasper said.

Anyone that believes a siren is not working or malfunctioning can reach out to the Office of Emergency Management at 563-264-7142.

Outdoor Siren Locations

In cooperation with the Muscatine Area Geographic Information Consortium (MAGIC), a link has been created for Muscatine County residents to pinpoint where the outdoor warning sirens are located. Click on the following link to view the locations: [OUTDOOR SIRENS](#).

Free National Weather Service Storm Spotter Training



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For those interested in becoming storm spotters, the National Weather Service will be conducting both an in-person and virtual (on-line) training. Storm spotter training will be held at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 15, at Calvary Church in Muscatine. Classes cover severe weather hazards including thunderstorms and tornadoes, the general structure and movement of severe thunderstorms, identification of important storm features, and safety concerns.

All in-person and virtual classes to be conducted by the NWS Quad Cities office, and all classes last about 2 hours. Classes are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required for virtual classes. Classes are appropriate for all ages, but ages 10 and up will likely get the most out of the training.

Click [QUAD CITIES STORM WATCHERS](#) for more information or visit the [Storm Spotter Training](#) event notification on Facebook.

Testing and Activation of the Muscatine County-Wide Outdoor Warning System

The Muscatine County Emergency Management Agency has established a Guidance policy for Testing and Activation of the Muscatine County-Wide Outdoor Warning System. As a reminder, sirens are used to alert those who are outdoors of an imminent hazard and prompt them to go indoors and seek further information. The information will be available to the general public through the county and other municipalities' websites.

For more information, visit the [Emergency Management](#) website, and follow them on [Facebook](#).

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