



For more information, contact:

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ANNUAL OUTDOOR SIREN TESTING BEGINS ON APRIL 7

Sirens designed to alert citizens who are outdoors of hazardous weather conditions

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Muscatine Joint Communications Center (MUSCOM), in partnership with Muscatine County Emergency Management, will commence its annual outdoor siren testing on Monday, April 7. These tests occur on the first Monday of each month at 11 a.m. during non-freezing months (April through October).



However, if severe weather is forecasted on a scheduled testing day, the sirens will not be tested.

When Are Sirens Activated?

Outdoor warning sirens are activated by MUSCOM during severe weather when one of the following conditions is met:



- A **Tornado Warning** is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS).
- A **tornado or funnel cloud** is reported by a trained weather spotter.
- A **Severe Thunderstorm Warning** is issued by the NWS, or a trained spotter report:
 - Winds of 70 mph or greater and/or
 - Hail golf ball-sized or larger

According to the National Weather Service, most fatalities in severe storms result from falling trees and large branches. Winds reaching 70 mph are typically strong enough to break large branches and small trees, while hail of golf-ball size or larger can shatter windows.

Why Do We Activate Sirens for Severe Thunderstorms?

"Muscatine County follows the guidelines established by the National Weather Service," said Chris Jasper, Director of Emergency Management/911 for Muscatine County. "Because of the extreme danger posed by falling trees and debris, we will continue to activate sirens for Severe Thunderstorm Warnings that meet the 70 mph wind or large hail threshold."

Understanding Outdoor Warning Sirens

Outdoor sirens are designed to alert those who are outside of an imminent hazard, prompting them to seek shelter indoors and gather more information.

"We urge the public to tune into local news outlets or a NOAA weather radio during severe weather," Jasper said. "Additionally, we ask that 911 be used only for emergencies."

Countywide Activation

Sirens operate on a countywide system — meaning if a warning is issued for any part of Muscatine County, all sirens across the county will be activated.



"It might be sunny in Montpelier, but if there's a severe weather warning in West Liberty, sirens will still sound in Montpelier," Jasper explained.

No 'All Clear' Signal

Jasper also reminded residents that there is no 'all clear' siren. The threat is over when the National Weather Service warning expires.

Report Siren Issues & Get Prepared

Residents who believe a siren is malfunctioning can contact the Muscatine County Emergency Management Office at 563-264-7142 or via email at ema@muscatainecountyiowa.gov.

For severe weather preparedness tips, visit the National Weather Service at weather.gov/dvn. Businesses and families seeking assistance with emergency preparedness planning can reach out to the Muscatine County Emergency Management Office to schedule a consultation or visit ready.iowa.gov.