



Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by tornadoes and other types of severe weather, despite advance warning. In 2011, there were more than 1,000 weather-related fatalities and more than 8,000 injuries.

These tragic losses fuel the resolve to build a Weather-Ready Nation. Now is the time to take bold steps to build a nation in which the public understands the threat of weather, allowing communities to prepare in advance thanks to timely and credible warnings that translate into prompt, effective action. The result: fewer deaths and economic losses from severe weather.



Weather-readiness begins long before severe weather threatens. One of the first things individuals and communities can do is learn about their specific risk when it comes to severe weather.

Gather information about hazards by contacting your local emergency management office, American Red Cross chapter and National Weather Service forecast office.

Knowing and understanding this information ahead of time will help you prepare by understanding what types of disaster could occur and how best to respond and protect yourself. It is also critical to learn your community's warning signals and evacuation plans.

After gathering community-specific information, you can make a plan for when severe weather strikes. The plan should include two places to meet loved ones in case you are separated and an out-of-area emergency contact person as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if you get separated.

Social media can also be an effective tool for severe weather preparedness. A 2011 survey conducted by the [American Red Cross](#), the [Congressional Management Foundation](#) and other organizations, found that almost half the respondents said they would use social media in the event of a disaster to let relatives and friends know they were safe.

This is an important trend because research shows that people are most likely to take preparedness steps if they observe the preparations taken by others. Social media provides the perfect platform to model preparedness actions for others.

There are many actions you can share with others via social media to show how to be a force of nature when it comes to severe weather preparedness, including:

- Posting emergency telephone numbers by phones and in cell phones.
- Installing safety features in your house, such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Inspecting your home for potential hazards (such as items that can move, fall, break, or catch fire) and correcting them.
- Having your family learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher; and how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity in your home.
- Teaching children how and when to call 911 or local emergency medical services number.
- Keeping enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least 3 days.

For more information on severe weather safety and preparedness, click on the following links:

National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov/safety.php

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

Ready: www.ready.gov

ReadyOhio: www.ready.ohio.gov

Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness: www.weathersafety.ohio.gov



(<http://www.ready.gov/pledge>)

Make a Plan

Know where to go

When severe weather strikes, the difference between life and death can be summed up in as little as two words: Be prepared. Making a plan for what you and your family will do when severe weather strikes is an important step in being prepared and building a Weather-Ready Nation.

As part of National Severe Weather Preparedness Week, NOAA and FEMA are urging people to “Pledge to Prepare.” When you Pledge to Prepare, you will take the first step to making sure that you and your family are prepared for severe weather. These include developing a family communications plan, putting an emergency kit together, keeping important papers and valuables in a safe place, and getting involved.



While there are basic elements that should be a part of any plan, it's important to also tailor your plan to the individual needs of you or your family. This is especially important for the elderly or those with disabilities or special medical or dietary needs.

As part of tailoring your plans, consider working with others to create networks of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers who will assist each other in an emergency. Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in the network can assist each other with communication, care of children, pets, or specific needs like the operation of durable medical equipment. Create your own personal network for specific areas where you need assistance.

Have your children go on a severe weather preparation adventure. They can learn how to protect themselves and how they can help their family stay safe. When children complete the game, they receive a Young Meteorologist certificate. The game is part of Plan!t Now's Young Meteorologist Program which was created in cooperation with an NWS partner, the National Education Association.

When you create a plan and help others do the same, you become a force of nature that can be as powerful at saving lives as violent weather can be at taking them.

Build a Kit

Building a Weather-Ready Nation, one kit at a time

When Lisa Rebstock “saw the news that something was coming” toward her home just south of Fort Worth, Texas, she knew that she had just moments to spare. The mother of two wasn’t used to Texas-size severe weather, having grown up in Massachusetts, but with the help of her husband, Ben, a native Texan, she made sure one key element was checked off her list well in advance of the tornado that destroyed her home on April 3, her disaster survival kit. Lisa had the kit with her in the bathroom where she and her two young daughters safely rode out the storm.

“I had baby bottles, I had diapers, I had snacks, flashlights — everything I needed,” she told NBC’s TODAY. “And we used a lot of that stuff in that kit. Thank God I had it planned and thank God we got in there in the time we did.”

Lisa’s actions represent just what it takes to be a Force of Nature. In addition to having a plan of action when severe weather strikes — and alerting others via cell phone or social media — it’s vital that you have a disaster emergency kit prepared well in advance and ready-to-go when disaster strikes.



A disaster supplies kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. You may need enough food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours, in case local officials and relief workers cannot reach you immediately after a tornado or other severe weather hits. You could get help in hours or it might take days.

Additionally, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephones may be cut off for days or even a week, or longer. Your supplies kit should contain items to help you manage during these outages.

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For more information on how you can participate this week and increase both your and your community’s preparedness check out www.ready.gov/severeweather. A digital toolkit for the week is available here.



Weather-Ready Nation

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Get a NOAA Weather Radio

How a radio can save your life

A NOAA Weather Radio, or NWR, is more than just a radio. It's a life-saver – broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest NOAA National Weather Service office across a nationwide network of radio stations.

87-year-old Wilma Nelson of Woodward, Okla., recently experienced the power of a NOAA Weather Radio when a devastating tornado struck her town of 12,000.

"I thought, 'I'd better get out of here,'" she told CBS News, saying that when her NOAA Weather Radio woke her up, she moved quickly into a closet that she had "all prepared" in advance. Nelson's granddaughter-in-law, Janelle Semmel, said that the advance outlooks and warnings issued by the National Weather Service saved lives. "We took it very seriously, because of the buildup that they had been talking about all week of the chances of storms that we had here," she said.



If you live in an area that experiences tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, or other severe weather, strongly consider buying a weather radio. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, but the one chosen should be able to give you all the information you need in the way you need it. Your local Weather Forecast Office can provide assistance programming your radio.

NOAA Weather Radios also can be made accessible to people who are hearing impaired. In some situations, it can be connected to an existing alerting system in a deaf or hard of hearing person's home. For example, if a deaf person has a flashing light alert system connected to a doorbell or other sensor, the radio may also have the capability to be connected to that system. The same may be true with pillows that vibrate or beds that shake. Some come with an LCD display, warning lights, or simple texts that make alerts visible to deaf or hard of hearing people.

Soon the wireless cell phone industry will provide free emergency alerts to mobile devices. Wireless Emergency Alerts messages are text-like alerts that will better equip the public with emergency information including NWS watches and warnings.

When the National Weather Service issues a warning, numerous alert systems are triggered, including NOAA Weather Radio, media outlets, internet and wireless-based services and sirens, which are owned and operated by local officials. It's best to use multiple sources to find out about severe weather. If you're in the know, you can be a force of nature poised to take life-saving action.

Be an Example

Beyond personal preparedness, inspire others to act

Many of us have people who we admire and respect in our lives. We may consider them our role models or think of them as having behavior or principles that we would like to attain.

Everyone can be a role model when it comes to severe weather safety. Learn about severe weather, gather information, and know what to do when severe weather strikes. Having the confidence that comes from knowledge can keep you and your home safe. It also makes you a Force of Nature against the natural disasters that come from the forces of severe weather.



This week, we've highlighted several examples of such people – Stephanie Decker in Indiana, Lisa Rebstock in Texas and Wilma Nelson in Oklahoma. We know that there are many more. In fact, we know that each and every person across the country has the potential to be a force of nature in their communities.

Being a force of nature goes beyond taking appropriate preparedness action. It's about inspiring others to do the same. When you go to shelter after a warning, text, tweet or update your status so your friends and family know. You might just save their lives, too. Check out [this video](#) to see how you can be a force of nature in the face of severe weather.

Social media can be an effective tool for severe weather preparedness. A 2011 survey conducted by the American Red Cross, the Congressional Management Foundation and other organizations found that almost half the respondents said they would use social media in the event of a disaster to let relatives and friends know they were safe. A news release from the Red Cross highlights the survey results.

This is an important trend because research shows that people are most likely to take preparedness steps if they observe the preparations taken by others. Social media provides the perfect platform to model preparedness actions for others.