



**Governor John R. Kasich**

American Red Cross  
Emergency Management Association of Ohio  
National Weather Service  
Ohio Citizen Corps  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal  
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Insurance  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
Ohio Insurance Institute  
Ohio News Network

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TORNADO OUTBREAK STARTS SEVERE WEATHER SEASON EARLY**

***Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 25-31 – Statewide Tornado Drill is March 28***

**COLUMBUS, OH** – March 25-31 is Ohio’s Severe Weather Awareness Week, proclaimed by Governor John R. Kasich and promoted by the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, to encourage residents to prepare for weather incidents that typically occur during spring and summer months, but they may strike at any time.

“This month’s line of storms and tornadoes are prime examples of why we need to be prepared at all times for all types of severe weather,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “Make a disaster preparedness plan. Know what to do for all incidents that can impact your home, such as tornadoes, flooding, thunder and lightning storms, and fires. Practice your plan. Know how to shelter indoors and how to evacuate your home.”

Usually, during late February and early March, our weather concerns involve snowstorms or winter flooding – not tornadoes. But during the early evening hours of March 2, an outbreak of about 75 tornadoes swept across the Midwest and South and killed at least 39 people in 10 states, including three Clermont County residents and one Adams County resident.

After several days of surveying storm damages from March 2, the National Weather Service confirmed that seven tornadoes touched down in Ohio. The strongest tornado was an EF3 that formed in Kentucky and swept across Moscow in Clermont County and Hamersville in Brown County.

Governor Kasich declared a state of emergency for Clermont County on March 3. After damage assessments were conducted by teams of FEMA, local and state officials on March 6, the governor requested a presidential disaster declaration. The state was denied a federal declaration, but was granted a Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration on March 12 for Clermont and its contiguous counties.

As part of a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), the state of Ohio will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System on Wednesday, March 28 at 9:50 a.m. During this time, Ohio counties will sound their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to practice their tornado drills and emergency plans.

Another key element to severe weather safety and preparedness is staying informed. Know the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning.

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“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

[www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov)

A **tornado watch** is issued by the NWS when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the area. Watches are usually issued for four to eight hours. During a tornado watch, review tornado safety plans and be prepared to move to a safe place if conditions worsen. Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for weather updates.

A **tornado warning** is issued by the NWS when a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar or sighted by storm spotters. Most Ohio communities have outdoor warning sirens that sound during storm warnings. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, **do not** stop to take pictures or shoot video. Seek safe shelter immediately. Tornado warnings are usually issued for 30 minutes. Continue to listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for up-to-date weather information.

To see the immense power that a tornado had over a train, visit the OCSWA website: [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov) and under Tornado Safety, click on the video link, **Train vs. Tornado**.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourages Ohioans to learn and practice the following tornado safety tips:

- During tornado drills or actual tornado warnings, **DUCK!**  
**D** – Go **DOWN** to the lowest level  
**U** – Get **UNDER** something (like a basement staircase or heavy table or desk)  
**C** – **COVER** your head  
**K** – **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed
- Be prepared for severe weather before a storm watch or warning is issued. Meet with household members to develop a disaster plan to respond to all hazards, including tornado watches and warnings. Conduct regular tornado drills.
- If you are a person with special needs, register your name and address with your local emergency management agency, police and/or fire departments before any natural or man-made disaster occurs.
- The NOAA Weather Radio has alerting tools available for people who are hearing impaired. Some weather radio receivers can be connected to an existing home security system, similar to a doorbell, smoke detector or other sensor. For additional information, visit the NWS NOAA Weather Radio link: [http://www.weather.gov/nwr/special\\_need.htm](http://www.weather.gov/nwr/special_need.htm)
- The safest place to be during a tornado is a basement. If the building has no basement or cellar, go to a small, centrally located room on the lowest level of the building, such as a bathroom or closet or interior hallway.
- If you are in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little or no protection from tornadoes.
- If you are outside with no shelter, lie in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under a highway overpass or bridge. You will be exposed to stronger winds and flying debris.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 14 agencies and organizations that are dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan and prepare for severe weather incidents and home emergencies before they happen. For additional information on tornado and other severe weather safety and preparedness, visit the OCSWA website at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).