



STATE OF OHIO
Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness

Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness
Mike DeWine, Governor ▪ www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

March 2020

Even as we enter a new decade, weather continues to greatly impact our lives and affecting our daily activities. From the lack of sun during a dreary stretch of grey winter days, to the hope and promise we feel in the spring, to the sense of well-being a warm summer breeze brings, weather also affects our emotions. Severe weather, however, can have a dramatic impact on our lives. Just take last Memorial Day as an example.

The Ohio Committee on Severe Weather Awareness has been around for more than 40 years helping Ohioans achieve a better understanding of the weather hazards we face, and the steps we should take today to help us weather the storm tomorrow. The committee's work includes several weather safety awareness campaigns each year, such as:

- Severe Weather Awareness Week (March 22-28);
- Lightning Safety Awareness Week (June 21-27); and
- Winter Safety Awareness Week (November 15-21).

The main message of these special weeks, and of the committee itself, is that there are small, easy steps individuals can take right now to protect themselves and their loved ones. Steps like having a preparedness kit (one for the house and one for the car); making a family communication plan, staying informed about the hazards prevalent in Ohio, and knowing the difference between watches and warnings. One of the highlights of the committee's year is the annual severe weather poster contest. Students in first through sixth grades can enter, with winners announced at an awards ceremony during the Ohio State Fair.

Looking back on 2019, one cannot forget Memorial Day weekend. Before leaving the office that Friday afternoon, I posted a message to more than 1 million Ohioans on the social media platform Nextdoor "Keep an Eye on the Sky this Weekend," because the National Weather Service (NWS) had predicted the probability of severe storms over the long holiday weekend. And they nailed it!

Luckily, the storm front didn't hit Ohio until Monday evening, when most Ohioans were safe in their homes after a long weekend of holiday activities and cookouts. When it did hit, it hit hard with 21 tornadoes overnight in the Buckeye State, including an EF-4 and two EF-3s. Two of those large twisters hit heavily populated areas in Montgomery and Greene counties. No doubt, early warnings from the NWS saved countless lives as Ohioans took heed of their warnings.

Making people aware of weather hazards and how to prepare for them is easy, getting them to use the information and actually take those first steps is much harder. Let's not let the hard-earned lessons from 2019 go to waste: Have a plan. Make a kit. Be prepared.

For more information, please go to the committee's website, weathersafety.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,

Jay Carey
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