



**Governor Ted Strickland**

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 News Network

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 Insurance Institute

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 19, 2008**

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**Ohio's Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 23-29**  
***Statewide Tornado Drill is Wednesday, March 26***

(Columbus, OH) – When the outdoor warning sirens sound, do you know what to do? When you hear the wail of the warning sirens, it means that severe, life-threatening storms, such as tornadoes, have been spotted in your area. Seek immediate shelter.

Many areas in Ohio have a network of outdoor emergency alert sirens that aid in early notification of weather emergencies. The sirens are designed as an outdoor warning system to alert area residents of threatening conditions. County emergency management agencies test their sirens on a regular basis.

Governor Ted Strickland has proclaimed March 23-29 as Severe Weather Awareness Week. In a coordinated effort with the governor and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, the state will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System on Wednesday, March 26 at 9:50 a.m. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to exercise their emergency plans and tornado drills during this time.

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. They are spawned from powerful thunderstorms and can cause death and destruction in mere seconds. April through July mark the peak months that tornadoes can occur in Ohio – usually between the hours of 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. But as history has shown, tornadoes can happen at any time during any month.

The best defense when faced with tornadoes or any severe weather incident is *preparedness*. Know the conditions. Make a plan. Practice the plan. Be prepared.

**Know the difference between a tornado "watch" and "warning"**

A Tornado **WATCH** means conditions are favorable for a tornado to occur. When a watch is issued, be prepared to seek shelter and stay tuned to a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio station for weather updates.

A Tornado **WARNING** means a tornado has been sighted in your area. Seek immediate shelter. Most communities in Ohio have special sirens to warn of an approaching tornado. NOAA Weather Radios and local TV and radio stations will broadcast information about severe weather through special weather bulletins and newscasts.

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"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

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

**Know what to do before a tornado**

Be alert to changing weather conditions. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or commercial radio or television newscasts for up-to-date weather information. When a tornado watch is issued, review your emergency preparedness plan. Don't wait for the watch to become a warning.

Look for approaching storms. Tornado danger signs can include a dark, often greenish or orange-gray sky; large hail; large, dark and low-lying clouds (rotating or funnel-shaped); sudden, loud roar that is similar to a freight train. If you see or hear any of these signs, prepare to take immediate shelter.

**Know what to do during a tornado**

During a tornado drill or tornado warning, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourages everyone to **DUCK**.

**D** – Go **DOWN** to the lowest level

**U** – Get **UNDER** something

**C** – **COVER** your head

**K** – **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed

**If you are in a building**, go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level, such as a bathroom, closet or interior hallway, that is away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls. Do not open windows.

**If you are in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home**, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of 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.

For additional information on tornado safety and severe weather emergency preparedness, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Web site at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

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