



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 Mental Health
and Addiction Services
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute
WBNS-10TV News

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**Ice Jams, Snow Melt Flooding and Severe Storms are Potential Threats
during Ohio's Severe Weather Awareness Week**
Statewide Tornado Drill is March 5th at 9:50 a.m.

COLUMBUS, OH – This winter in Ohio has been one for the “meteorological history books.” Ohioans were introduced to Polar Vortex and Arctic Blasts while enduring propane shortages. Staying warm this winter has been no easy feat.

Now, the state is experiencing above-normal temperatures, thunderstorms and snow-melt flooding potentials. Severe Weather Awareness Week couldn't come at a better time. Governor John R. Kasich, in a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, proclaims March 2-8 as Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week.

“This is the second year that Ohio's Severe Weather Awareness Week coincides with National Severe Weather Preparedness Week,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “During these weather safety campaigns, we encourage Ohioans to build a disaster supply kit, make a plan, practice the plan, and be informed of all hazards that can impact our state, particularly severe weather.”

As part of Severe Weather Awareness Week, as coordinated by OCSWA, the state of Ohio will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System on Wednesday, March 5 at 9:50 a.m. During this time, many Ohio counties will sound and test their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to practice their tornado drills and emergency plans.

OCSWA encourages Ohioans to practice the following safety measures:

Know Your Risk – Learn and understand the different types of weather hazards that occur in Ohio. Know how severe weather could impact your household, your job, your community. Ohio's springtime hazards include tornadoes, thunderstorms, floods, and even snowstorms through early spring. Visit the OCSWA website at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov to view current weather in Ohio, and to learn about severe weather safety and preparedness.

Know the Weather Terms – Know the difference between storm watches and storm warnings. For example, a *tornado watch* is issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the area. 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 television or radio newscasts for storm updates.

“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

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

Other tornado safety tips include:

- 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
- 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 15 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.

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