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## Outdoor Warning Siren Activation

### 360.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the activation of the outdoor warning siren system.

### 360.2 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used by the National Weather Service to help community service units warn their residents of impending severe weather conditions:

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** - The threat of severe thunderstorms and damaging winds exist in a defined area.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** - A severe thunderstorm has been observed by the public, or detected by radar, and persons in the warning area should take precautions.

**Tornado Watch** - Climatic conditions exist which could result in tornado activity within a defined area. Tornado watch bulletins will also state that severe thunderstorm activity is expected.

**Tornado Warning** - A tornado has been sighted in the defined area or has been detected by radar. Persons in or near the area should take immediate cover or steps to insure safety.

**Severe Weather Statement** - Issued by the National Weather Service during weather watches. Advises the status of weather in the WATCH area.

**Attack Warning Signal** - An attack warning is a 3 to 5 minute wavering tone or siren or a series of short blasts. The attack warning signal means that an actual attack or detected missile launched against the United States has been detected and that protective action should be taken immediately. The attack warning shall be repeated as often as deemed necessary to obtain the required response by the population, including taking protective action related to the arrival of fallout. Per federal guidance, "this signal will be used for no other purpose and will have no other meaning."

**Attention or Alert Signal** - An attention or alert signal is a 3 to 5 minute steady signal from a siren. This signal will be used to alert the public of peacetime emergencies. The attention or alert signal shall indicate to all persons " turn on your radio or television, listen for essential emergency information and take immediate cover. This signal will be used for weather emergency.

### 360.3 SYSTEM TESTS

- (a) It is essential that the warning system be tested on a periodic basis to be certain that the system is operating properly and to help the public learn to recognize the warning signals.
- (b) The Illinois Emergency Services and Disaster Act of 1988 specifically indicates "the testing of disaster warning devices, including outdoor warning sirens, shall be held only on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 o'clock in the morning and during disaster training

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exercises that are specifically and expressly approved in advance by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency." Federal guidance indicates that monthly warning system tests should occur in the following manner:

1. "The ATTENTION/ALERT signal should be sounded for 1 minute." This testing procedure will establish a test exercise pattern different from that used in an actual emergency when the ATTENTION/ALERT or the ATTACK/WARNING signal will be sounded for 3 to 5 minutes.
- (c) The ESDA Director shall assume the responsibility of ensuring that all outdoor warning sirens functioned properly during monthly testing. The ESDA Director shall ensure that ESDA personnel physically check each outdoor warning siren location to ensure that the sirens functioned properly. Notification shall be made to the service provider when sirens are found to be non-functional. A monthly report shall be made and submitted to the Chief of Police which summarizes the physical inspections of the outdoor warning sirens.

#### 360.3.1 SIREN LOCATIONS

- (a) The Outdoor Warning Sirens are positioned at the following locations:
1. Village Hall (Village of Peotone)
  2. Peotone-Wilmington Road by lift station (Village of Peotone)
  3. Hauert Street by Peotone Park (Village of Peotone)

#### **360.4 EMERGENCY ACTIVATION OF WARNING SYSTEMS FOR SEVERE WEATHER**

- (a) During a severe weather incident, local warning systems should be activated if:
1. A tornado or funnel cloud aloft is reported within 10 miles of alert area. This 10 mile perimeter, at minimum, should be extended geographically around the perimeter of the farthest edges of the area being alerted.
  2. A trained municipal employee, trained Skywarn Weather Spotter or Police or Fire personnel report a confirmed sighting of a tornado, or funnel cloud aloft.
  3. If Peotone Township is in the path of a tornado which has touched down and is moving towards Peotone Township.
  4. If Police, ESDA, or Fire personnel request the activation of the system due to severity of storm which could indicate the possibility of a tornado.
  5. When reported that a tornado has touched down in Peotone Township.
  6. Any time the National Weather Service advises, "take cover" which addresses Peotone Township.
  7. To alert the public if it is necessary to evacuate an area. (Hazmat, Flooding, Public Safety, etc.)

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- (b) An unconfirmed sighting is a report that is received from one or more members of the general public and no severe weather is obvious and the National Weather Service has issued no weather watch or warning. A radio-dispatched vehicle should be dispatched to investigate the unconfirmed report and determine the validity of the report.
- (c) Following the occurrence of a weather event meeting the criteria the East Com Public Safety Communications Center will activate the outdoor warning system. Once activated, the warning system should not be re-sounded for the same storm or sighting.
  - 1. The warning system should be re-sounded for any new confirmed sighting that meets the activation criteria described above.
  - 2. Whenever the siren is activated for a weather event, the on-duty dispatcher shall notify the local radio station as soon as possible so the information can be broadcast to local residents.

#### 360.4.1 ALL CLEAR PROCEDURE

- (a) In keeping with the policy of the National Weather Service, the issuance of an "all clear" statement will not be issued by the local government.
- (b) Severe weather watches, whether severe thunderstorm or tornado, are traditionally issued for a period of 6 hours. The Weather Service may terminate a "watch" early if weather conditions change and the threat of severe weather conditions no longer exists.
- (c) Severe weather warnings, whether severe thunderstorms or tornado, are traditionally issued for a period of 1 hour. Warnings are usually allowed to expire on their own, without early termination by the Weather Service.
- (d) Residents requesting "all clear" information should be advised to monitor commercial radio and television for further weather information, but local government will not issue an "all clear" statement.
- (e) No activation of outdoor warning signals should be used to signify the "watch" termination or any kind of "all clear" advisory.

#### 360.4.2 TORNADO SIRENS ACTIVATION PROCEDURE

During severe weather conditions officers will monitor the Will-Warn channel of the Will County 800 Radio System for updates of weather conditions in the area.

Upon the officers' personal observation or determination based on weather conditions that the tornado warning sirens should be activated the following procedure will apply:

- (a) Officers' will notify EastCom dispatch to activate the tornado warning system or Officers' can activate the tornado warning system using their portable radio
- (b) Officers' must UNLOCK their radio using the directions below:
  - 1. Press both buttons on the radio at the same time to UNLOCK the radio

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2. Officers will select the channel (#16) that displays PEOTONE SIREN
  3. Officers will press and hold the OPT button for 3 seconds until the sequence of tones has completed, then release OPT button
  4. Officers should hear the tornado sirens activate or repeat step 3.
- (c) Officers will notify EastCom dispatch to record a CAD entry for activation of the tornado warning system Code: 9039
- (d) Officers should change the channel select back to PEOTONE and follow Step 1 to LOCK their radios.

#### **360.5 NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY**

- (a) Dispatchers will pay particular attention to the National Weather Service Monitor. The radio will emit a shrill tone alerting an impending weather bulletin. Dispatchers will also monitor the Illinois State Police Radio System (ISPERN) and the LEADS Network for any other bulletins.
- (b) Upon receipt of confirmation of severe weather watches/warnings regarding the Peotone area, the following procedures are in affect:
1. Tornado Watch
    - (a) Notify the Shift Supervisor.
    - (b) Notify all police units.
    - (c) During normal working hours the Chief of Police or his designee shall also be notified.
    - (d) Notify the Peotone Fire Protection District.
    - (e) During normal working hours the Public Works Department shall also be notified.
    - (f) The Shift Supervisor and Patrol Units shall be updated if weather bulletins indicate any change in status.
  2. Tornado Warning
    - (a) Ascertain if Peotone is in the probable path of the storm/tornado.
    - (b) If a tornado is within 10 miles of Peotone, notify the Shift Supervisor who will authorize the activation of the outdoor warning siren.
    - (c) Notify the Chief of Police or his designee.
    - (d) Verify that the Peotone Fire Protection District is aware of the tornado warning.
    - (e) During normal working hours, notify the Village Hall and the Public Works Department.

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- (f) During normal working hours, contact all schools and churches.
- 3. Tornado Touchdown
  - (a) Upon orders from the Shift Supervisor:
    - 1. Notify the Chief of Police or his designee, E.S.D.A. Director and Village President.
    - 2. Notify all off-duty personnel and have them report to the police department (unless directed elsewhere).
    - 3. Contact the Peotone Fire Protection District and advise them where their personnel and ambulances are needed.
    - 4. Contact Commonwealth Edison, Northern Illinois Gas, and AT & T (if conditions warrant).

#### 360.5.1 SUPERVISOR'S/SENIOR OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

- (a) Tornado Watch
  - 1. Begin planning for personnel assignments. Monitor Will County 800mz Will-Warn frequency.
  - 2. Notify ESDA and request their assistance as Weather Spotters.
  - 3. Have all on-duty personnel report to the police department to get their rain gear, flares, flashlights, and helmets.
  - 4. Keep informed of the weather conditions as they develop.
- (b) Tornado Warning
  - 1. Be available and assign personnel where needed.
  - 2. Determine if there are sufficient personnel in the Communications Center to handle the radio and telephone traffic.
- (c) Tornado Touchdown
  - 1. Set up a Command Post in the area requiring coordination of efforts. This will be a TOP PRIORITY AREA and will be sealed off to eliminate civilians and sightseers.
  - 2. Notify all off-duty personnel to report to the police department (unless otherwise directed).
  - 3. Request assistance from E.S.D.A. and local police departments to secure affected area(s). Requests for outside agency assistance should be handled pursuant Policy Manual § 353 ILEAS Mutual Aid Plan.
  - 4. In the event more than one area has been struck, designate supervisory personnel to take command of secondary areas and direct the rescue and security operation.

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5. Until relieved by the Chief of Police or other commanding officer, maintain command of the incident following the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS).

#### 360.5.2 PATROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

##### (a) Tornado Watch

1. Stay in assigned beat and pay attention to any changing weather conditions. Observe the sky to the west and southwest. (Normally tornados come from these directions)
2. Report visual observations to the Eastcom Communications Center.

##### (b) Tornado Warning

1. Be available at all times.
2. Observe conditions. Advise the dispatcher of any downed wires or trees, blocked streets, or flooding.
3. Be aware of any large gatherings in your beat and advise them of the Tornado Warning.

##### (c) Tornado Touchdown

1. Immediately evaluate your beat as to damage and injuries. Notify the Shift Supervisor by radio.
2. Assist in rescue operations and in securing the stricken area.
3. Stay in your beat unless otherwise directed by supervisor or command personnel.

#### 360.6 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- (a) The following web sites may prove useful with regard to severe weather and/or general weather information:

1. <http://weather.gov/chicago> (NOAA NWS Chicago home page)
2. [www.willcountyema.org](http://www.willcountyema.org) (Will County Emergency Management Agency)
3. [www.state.il.us/iema](http://www.state.il.us/iema) (Illinois Emergency Management Agency)
4. [www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov) (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

- (b) To view and print a copy of the Basic Spotter's Guide:

1. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures/basicspot.pdf>

- (c) Radio stations for emergency reports and information:

1. WJOL 1340 AM
2. WSSR 96.7 FM
3. WCCQ 98.3 FM

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4. WRQX 100.7 FM