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State Officials Urge Illinoisans to have Multiple Ways to Receive Emergency Alerts and Warnings

Holiday weekend forecast brings increased risk for severe weather and flash flooding throughout Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – As families set out to enjoy a long holiday weekend, state officials are urging residents to monitor local weather forecasts and always have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts and warnings. Officials with the National Weather Service (NWS) report additional storms are possible through the Memorial day weekend.

“In addition to the potential for strong to severe thunderstorms, these weather patterns will bring the potential for flash flooding and increase pressure on already swollen rivers,” said Acting IEMA Director, Alicia Tate-Nadeau. “In this day and age of families on the go, it is critical that you have multiple ways to receive notifications and updated information about severe weather.”

Emergency management professionals encourage residents to have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts because a disaster can occur at any time and anywhere. The most common means for receiving alerts include:

- NOAA Weather Radio
- Local Radio, Television
- Outdoor Warning Sirens
- Internet
- Wireless Emergency Alerts
- Weather Apps

The first line of defense against any emergency or hazard is personal preparedness. Follow these four steps to better prepare your family for severe weather:

1. Ensure each member of your family can receive emergency alerts and notifications.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are available on most smartphones. Check your phone’s notification settings under ‘Government Alerts’ to ensure ‘Emergency Alerts’ is turned on. With a WEA-enabled

phone, you will receive tornado and flash flood warnings issued for your location, even if you're traveling outside your home county or state.

FEMA offers a FREE mobile app that provides fast and reliable weather alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS). The app can be tailored to offer alerts for up to five different locations nationwide. The mobile app can also help you locate open shelters and disaster resource centers near you in the event of an emergency.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alert radios can be programmed to issue a tone alarm and provide information about a warning that has been issued for your county. The tone alarm provides a 24/7 alert to approaching hazards, even during overnight hours when many people are sleeping.

2. Identify your shelter location at home, work and school

If a tornado warning is issued for your area, seek shelter immediately, preferably in a basement underneath the stairs or a sturdy piece of furniture. If there is no basement, go to an interior hallway or a small interior room without windows, get under sturdy furniture and use pillows or cushions to protect your head and neck.

Flooding continues to threaten communities across our state. If it is likely your home could flood: Don't Wait, Evacuate. Residents in river communities are urged to have a family evacuation plan in place, in the event you are asked to evacuate due to rising floodwaters.

3. Develop and practice a family communication plan

Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes. Know how you will contact one another and reconnect if separated during a storm or other emergency. Remember, during a disaster, phone lines may be overwhelmed by emergency calls. To let loved ones know you are safe, consider a check-in on social media or send a text.

4. Review your emergency supply kit

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for work, home and your vehicle. Remember to consider the needs of all your family members, including your pets. After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several hours or several days. Being prepared means having your own food, water and other supplies. To find a list of basic disaster supplies, visit ready.illinois.gov.

For more information about what to do before, during and after a storm, please visit www.Ready.Illinois.gov. There you will find a *Severe Weather Preparedness Guide*, developed by IEMA and NWS, which provides tips on how to prepare for all weather emergencies. Additional tips and information are available on the Ready Illinois Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ReadyIllinois) and Twitter page (www.twitter.com/ReadyIllinois).