

February 28, 2022

Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau
Public Information Officer Kevin Sur
217-557-4756 / Kevin.Sur@Illinois.gov

2022 Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Illinois

IEMA and NWS encourage increased preparedness efforts with escalating weather hazards

SPRINGFIELD – In Illinois, we could be enjoying beautiful sunny skies, and the next moment, experience thunderstorms and a deluge of torrential rain. While the variable weather is second nature to many of us, it is important to not become complacent about the severe weather threats that exist in Illinois. As part of the 2022 Severe Weather Preparedness Week, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) have teamed up to publish a [Severe Weather Preparedness Guide](#) to help Illinoisans be better prepared when severe weather strikes.

“Sharing the dangers of weather hazards and a few preparedness tips are just the first steps. Applying safety actions in an emergency takes practice. This week, our professionals at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency encourage all families, businesses, schools, and communities to plan ahead, build a kit, practice what to do, and be better prepared,” **said IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau.**

The National Weather Service will be recognizing Severe Weather Preparedness Week during the week of February 28 - March 4. During this week, Illinoisans are encouraged to:

- Update your [family communications plan](#)
- Make a severe weather preparedness [plan](#)
- Build an emergency preparedness [kit](#)
- Identify your [safe place](#) to during a storm
- Know the various [weather watches/warnings/advisories](#)

The National Weather Service (NWS) is the official agency for issuing severe weather watches, warnings and advisories to alert the public when dangerous weather conditions are expected.

"We can't stress enough the importance of understanding the difference between a watch and a warning when tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and floods threaten your area," **said Warning Coordination Meteorologist Ed Shimon with the [National Weather Service in Lincoln, Illinois.](#)** "Studies show that people want to verify the threat to them is real before taking action. Seconds save lives when a tornado, significant damaging winds or flash floods are bearing down on your location."

Thunderstorms can produce damaging winds, deadly lightning, large hail, flash flooding and tornadoes. Illinois is averaging about 64 tornadoes each year. Tornadoes that strike at night are even more dangerous, like the [2021 Father's Day EF-3 tornado](#) that struck DuPage County.

The National Weather Service and state and local emergency management officials strongly encourage people to have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [All Hazards Weather Radio](#) with battery backup. These radios can be programmed to receive alerts for specified counties to keep you and your family apprised of impending weather and post-event information for all types of hazards including natural (earthquakes), environmental (chemical spills) and public safety hazards (AMBER alerts). When an alert is issued for the programmed area, the device will sound a warning alarm tone followed by the essential information. The information provided in these alerts will guide you through the appropriate protective measures.

“Watches mean that severe weather or flooding might develop near your area over the next several hours. Pay attention to the weather and be ready to act if storms approach. Warning means take action immediately,” **said Warning Coordination Meteorologist Mike Bardou with [NWS Chicago](#)**. “The storm either has a history of producing damage or flooding or is expected to do so in your area shortly.”

Families are constantly on the go. It is critical for people to have multiple ways to receive notifications and updated information about severe weather warnings. 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 critical disaster resources near you in the event of an emergency.

In addition to NOAA weather radios, [Wireless Emergency Alerts \(WEA\)](#) can provide lifesaving information about impending storms and emergencies. These alerts can be sent to your mobile device without the need to download an app or subscribe to a service. Not only are these tools critical to surviving overnight storms, but they can be extremely beneficial for those who travel.

For more information about what to do before, during and after severe weather, please visit:

Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA): www.Ready.Illinois.gov

IEMA Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ReadyIllinois>

IEMA Facebook/Meta: <https://www.facebook.com/ReadyIllinois>

IEMA Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/readyillinois/>

NWS Chicago: <https://www.weather.gov/lot/>

NWS Quad Cities: <https://www.weather.gov/dvn/>

NWS Lincoln: <https://www.weather.gov/ilx/>

NWS Paducah: <https://www.weather.gov/pah/>

NWS St. Louis: <https://www.weather.gov/lSX/>

###