

Webster County Emergency Management



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ALERTIOWA



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHANGES TO OUTDOOR WARNING SIREN ACTIVATION

On Thursday June 1st 2023, a new policy will take effect for the activation of the Outdoor warning sirens. Webster County Emergency Management Commission approved adding Hail and Wind as activation triggers for the sirens.

Activation Conditions:

Siren activation:

Tornado Warning

- Issued by the National Weather Service
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by a trained spotter

Severe Thunderstorms with the following criteria

- Hail > 1.75" (Golf ball size)
- Winds ≥ 70mph winds

Best Practices from the Iowa Emergency Management Association stress that 70mph winds, or greater, and golf-ball size hail (1.75") or greater, can be harmful and life-threatening to the public. 70mph winds can topple large, healthy trees, which can fall onto homes, vehicles, or other buildings. This can also affect structures such as mobile homes. Hail the size of golf balls will begin breaking windows and can cause bodily injury.

Not all Severe Thunderstorms are to the extent of this criteria, therefore, the sirens will not sound for every severe thunderstorm warning. Only warnings meeting the winds 70mph or greater, and/or hail 1.75"(golf-ball) or greater will trigger siren activation.

The policy remains that only sirens within the warning area will be activated.

The siren tones will have a slight change as well.

- Saturday's Noon test – 1 minute Wail-tone.
- Warning Activation – 3 minute Alert tone – a steady tone.
 - Previously all activations were the wail tone – by changing the tone, we hope this will lesson any confusion of a test vs actual warning.
 - Sirens will re-activate for any additional warning in the same area.

We want to stress the importance of the sirens being meant for OUTDOOR WARNING. This means, if you are outdoors and you hear the sirens, you should move indoors to a safe location, and check the local weather. There is **NO** – All Clear.

Any questions regarding changes of this policy should be directed to ema@webstercountyia.org

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