

Things to Know about Washington County's Outdoor Warning Sirens



How many outdoor warning sirens are in Washington County?

- There are currently 73 sirens in Washington County.

How are these sirens tested?

- Washington County Sheriff's Office 911 Communication Center tests/activates all sirens in the Washington County at 1:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month, from March through October.

Whose responsibility is it to maintain these sirens?

- Each city/township in Washington County purchases and maintains their sirens.

What are Washington County's policies detailing the circumstances under which the sirens would be sounded?

- The National Weather Service contacts the State Warning Point (Minnesota State Patrol), who is then responsible for disseminating all watches and warnings to Washington County, except warnings for conditions generated within the county itself.

For severe weather warnings, outdoor warning siren activation in Washington County is based on the following criteria:

- When a Tornado Warning is issued for Washington County by the National Weather Service.
*Sirens are activated for each Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service.
It is possible for a new Warning to be issued before a previous Warning expires.*
- When the National Weather Service indicates sustained wind speeds of 70 miles per hour or more.
- When a City or County Public Safety Official (Police, Fire) requests activation due to imminent danger to life and/or property. In this situation, Washington County also notifies the National Weather Service Office in Chanhassen.

After a warning or siren activation request is received, Washington County Sheriff's Office 911 Communications Center determines which zone or zones of the county are affected by warning:

- Zone #1 – NORTH** All municipalities North of I94:
Bayport Lake Elmo Mahtomedi Oak Park Heights
Forest Lake Hugo Marine on St. Croix Oakdale
Scandia Stillwater
- Zone #2 – SOUTH** All municipalities South of Co. Rd. 12:
Bayport Mahtomedi St. Paul Park St. Croix Beach
Cottage Grove Oakdale Stillwater Woodbury
Lake Elmo Oak Park Heights
- Zone # 3 - COUNTY WIDE:**
All municipalities within Washington County

For Your Safety

- Washington County does not issue an "all-clear" tone from the outdoor sirens. Such a signal may be confusing to residents in the event of additional warnings.
- Outdoor warning sirens are meant to be heard outside. When sirens sound, residents should always seek shelter and tune to local weather information on radio, television, or NOAA weather radio for more information.
- The threat of severe weather does not stop when the sirens stop! Residents should continue to shelter and stay tuned to local weather information on radio, television or NOAA Weather Radios for the duration of the warning period.
- Many TV stations and internet sites also have tools that can send warnings to your computer and cellular phone. NOAA weather radios are also a good tool to warn residents of severe weather, whether indoors or outside.