

WARNING ANNEX

I. PURPOSE

This annex describes the warning systems in place in the jurisdiction and the responsibilities and procedures for using them. All components of the system will be identified and the provisions that have been made to implement warning described.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. *Situations*

1. Hazardous material spills, tornadoes, or other hazards will require warning the general public and emergency response groups in an expeditious manner. Warning sirens and commercial radio announcements are methods which will be used to alert the citizens of the county.

B. *Assumptions*

1. Some people who are directly threatened by a hazard may ignore, not hear, or not understand warnings issued by the government.
2. Functional needs groups such as the hearing impaired, sight impaired, physically disabled, or institutionalized (e.g., in mental treatment facilities, jails/prisons/detention facilities, etc.) require special attention to ensure a workable warning system is established.
3. Emergency response organizations such as the fire and police may be called upon to help warn the public.
4. Radio/TV stations will be willing to issue warning announcements.
5. Where available, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Warning Radio stations will disseminate watches and warning issued by the National Weather Service (NWS); NOAA tone alert radios are automatically activated when such watches and warnings are issued.
6. The need to warn the public and alert government officials is common to all disaster situations.
7. The time available for warning may vary, from ample to none, depending on the speed of onset.
8. Some jurisdictions have fire department sirens that can be activated to warn the public.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. The 800 MHz radio system will be the primary source to notify emergency response organizations concerning warnings about to be issued.

B. Appropriate government officials will be notified by telephone.

C. The dissemination of alerts and warnings to the general public can be accomplished in the following ways:

1. Activation of the Outdoor Warning Siren System: Communities with sirens can activate them, or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or 911 centers may cause them to be activated to alert their residents to an actual or impending emergency. The Outdoor Warning Siren System should only be activated for extreme emergency situations.
2. Commercial radio station broadcasts: Radio stations WCRA-WCRC and WXEF in Effingham can be requested to make emergency announcements.
3. Activation of cable over-ride systems: Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has a Mediacom Cable TV over-ride system that it can activate to alert the residents to an actual disaster or impending emergency.
4. Emergency service vehicle PA systems: Most emergency service vehicles have sirens with a build-in PA system that can be used to broadcast emergency information.
5. Telephone: This should only be used to notify a small number of people due to the time-consuming process. The City of Effingham has an emergency telephone warning system which can notify all citizens within its jurisdiction.
6. Door-to-door notification: This should only be used for an isolated area with few residents in a slowly-developing situation.

D. Warning for specific locations such as schools, hospital, nursing homes, recreational facilities, child daycare and adult daycare, public assembly areas, and major industrial sites will be accomplished by NOAA weather warning radios. Warnings will be augmented by commercial radio and TV broadcasts as well as warning sirens.

E. There is not a significant population of the hearing impaired or non-English speaking groups in Effingham County requiring special warning provisions; however, the TTY system for the hearing impaired will be utilized when possible.

F. A single tone warning siren signal will be sounded for all warnings. No "all clear" tone will be given.

G. Interjurisdictional Relationships

1. Both City and County 911 PSAPs have the authority to activate the warning sirens, notify the National Weather Service to activate weather warning radios, and notify commercial radio and TV stations to broadcast warnings.
2. Effingham County EMA and/or the EOC have authorization to activate the warning sirens, notify the National Weather Service to activate weather warning radios, and notify commercial radio and TV stations to broadcast warnings.
3. Industrial complexes and transportation services that use, produce, store or transport hazardous materials should immediately alert the 911 PSAPs or EOC when an emergency situation involving hazardous material occurs. Any warning, if necessary, will be instituted by 911 PSAPs or the EOC, or EMA.
4. Any affected nearby jurisdiction shall be warned of the HazMat incident by any means possible to alert them of the potential threat of the situation.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Chief Elected Official (CEO)

1. Specifies who has authority to order activation of warning systems.
2. Assigns a single organization the responsibility of activation of the various warning systems in the jurisdiction. The organization must be able to initiate the warning systems around-the-clock. In many jurisdictions the 911 system has this responsibility.
3. Designates public service agencies, personnel, equipment, and facilities that can augment the jurisdiction's warning capabilities.

B. Warning Coordinator (EMA Director)

1. When notified of an emergency situation, reports to the EOC. (However, when practical, this individual should be permanently assigned to the EOC.)
2. Implements call-down rosters to alert emergency responders or provide situation updates.
3. Activates public warning systems.
4. Implements contingency plans to provide warnings if established warning system fails to work.

5. Coordinates warning frequencies and procedures with EOCs at higher levels of government and with adjacent communities.

6. Works with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to ensure pertinent warning information is provided to the print media for distribution to the public.

C. EOC Manager

1. Activates warning section in the EOC.

2. Ensures emergency warning systems are activated when directed to do so.

3. Issues cancellation of warning notice or otherwise ensures emergency responders and the public are aware of the fact that the emergency situation is terminated.

D. All Tasked Organizations

1. Upon receipt of a warning message or signal, initiate internal organization notification actions to:

a. Alert employees and volunteer augmentees assigned emergency response duties to the emergency situation.

b. As appropriate to the situation:

1) suspend or curtail normal business activities.

2) recall essential off-duty employees.

3) send non-critical employees home.

4) evacuate the organization's facilities.

2. If appropriate, augment the EOC's effort to warn the public through the use of vehicles equipped with public address systems, sirens, employees going door to door, etc.

V. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

A. Administration

1. Listing of all phone numbers and radio frequencies of emergency response groups can be found in the Resource Manual.

B. Logistics

1. City and County 911 PSAPs will alternate testing warning sirens the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 A.M. Fire departments wishing to test their siren shall notify the 911 PSAPs.
2. Agreements with the private sector such as commercial broadcast stations to augment warning capabilities are not needed.
3. Incident Command/Unified Commands shall maintain warning equipment at their immediate disposal such as PA systems and mobile sirens.

VI. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF WARNINGS ANNEX

1. The responsibility for revisions, keeping attachments current, and developing necessary documents for the annex belongs to EMA.
2. The responsibility for revisions and maintaining SOGs belongs to the emergency response groups and 911 PSAPs.

VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

- A. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended 42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*
- B. The Illinois Emergency Management Act (20 ILCS 3305).
- C. County Ordinance relating to Emergency Management as adopted by the Effingham County Board on January 18, 2005.
- D. *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning: State and Local Guide (101)*; FEMA April 2001.

VIII. APPENDICES

- A. Effingham County Siren Locations
- B. Siren Sounding Protocol

▪ **APPENDIX A. EFFINGHAM COUNTY SIREN LOCATIONS**

CITY OF EFFINGHAM

South Banker Street (Fire St. #3)
East Jefferson Avenue (Oakridge Cemetery)
North 4th Street (Township Building)
North Keller Drive (Best Inns)
Fayette and Banker (underpass)
West Fayette Avenue (KC Hall)

CITY OF ALTAMONT

Altamont Firehouse, 202 N. Second Street, Altamont

LAKE SARA AREA

▪ **APPENDIX B. SIREN SOUNDING PROTOCOL**

1. EMA, the two 911 PSAP's and the local Fire Departments are authorized to activate the warning sirens. Effingham City EMA is authorized to activate city sirens.
2. The City and County PSAP's will alternate testing the sirens on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am. If local Fire Departments wish to test their activation system, they are to notify the PSAPs first.
3. The PSAPs will notify the radio stations, Mayor's office, and others as they deem necessary before testing the sirens.
4. The local municipalities are responsible for the proper operation of the sirens.
5. Sirens will be activated when:
 - a) The National Weather Service issues a **tornado warning**. If the NWS issues a warning for the entire county, all sirens will be activated. If a warning is issued for a particular area or town, only the sirens in that affected area will be activated.
 - b) A weather-spotter, firefighter, or law enforcement officer sights a **tornado or funnel cloud**. Only the sirens in the immediate area of the sighting and in the projected path will be activated. The projected path will be determined by the observer and the activating entity.
 - c) The National Weather Service issues a wind speed in excess of 75 mph or greater.
6. A steady tone will be sounded for approximately three (3) minutes for warning. No *all clear* will be sounded.
7. In the event that a weather-spotter, firefighter, or law enforcement officer disagrees on a sighting, the National Weather Service trained weather-spotter, firefighter, or law enforcement officer shall prevail over the untrained.