

# BARTON CO OUTDOOR WARNING SIREN PROTOCOL

---

The purpose of this policy is to establish a protocol for outdoor warning siren testing and storm activation. The outdoor warning sirens are intended to alert people who are outside and not designed to be heard from indoors.

The County of Barton encourages residents to utilize a NOAA Weather Radio that provides a warning signal when the area is under a watch or a warning. The advantage of having a weather radio is that you hear the alerts directly from the National Weather Service and are kept current of the warning status. Weather radios are available at most local retailers and are priced at approximately \$30.

The County of Barton also encourages residents to watch the local television channels or listen to a local radio station for updates and information about specific locations of storms.

## **Important Safety Tips:**

- **TORNADO WATCH:** means watch the sky! Keep informed on the weather conditions in your area and be prepared to take shelter.
- **TORNADO WARNING:** means seek shelter immediately!
- **SHELTER:** Immediately go to an interior room with NO windows on the lowest possible floor. If you are at school or work DO NOT GO to a cafeteria, gymnasium or large interior open space because the roof might collapse.
- **LEAVE MOBILE HOMES IMMEDIATELY:** Seek shelter in a nearby building or in a ditch.
- **DRIVING:** Take shelter in a nearby building, in a ditch or low-lying area away from your vehicle. If you are outside, remember to cover your head with your arms, coat or blanket to protect yourself from flying debris. Also watch for flash flooding. Never try to out drive a tornado.
- **OVERPASSES:** Are not safe. An overpass's under-the-girder-type construction can cause a dangerous wind tunnel effect. This may cause the winds to be stronger and more focused underneath. This can also cause the overpass to be a collector of debris.
- **FLASH FLOODING OR WATER ON THE ROAD:** During a thunderstorm, low-lying areas are prone to flash flooding. Never drive into water on the road. If your vehicle stalls, get out of your vehicle immediately and seek higher ground. It takes less than two feet of water to make your vehicle float. Once floating downstream, your vehicle can overturn trapping you inside.

## Testing of sirens

Testing will be done on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, at 1000 hours, weather permitting. If the siren testing cannot be completed on Wednesday, then the testing will be postponed until next month.

The test will run the full cycle to confirm ALL sirens completed a full cycle and shut down properly. The full cycle consists of: 3 minutes on.

Testing will NOT be done when there is threatening weather in the area, when the outside temperature is 40 degrees or below and when the wind speed or gust are near or above 40 to 50 miles per hour. (Red Flag Warnings)

Additional testing of sirens may be needed if a mechanical issue has surfaced at which time repairs will be made. This may cause for the need to check the siren at odd times, but a notification will be posted on the County website and Social Media, prior to the test.

## Siren activation due to weather

Outdoor warning sirens are activated when:

- The National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for Jasper County or Vernon County in Missouri, Crawford & Cherokee County in Kansas that is said to be moving directionally towards Barton County "or"
- A tornado is spotted by a trained weather spotter or emergency service personnel "or"
- When directed by the Emergency Management Director "or"
- The storm system approaching Barton County is producing life threatening winds as indicated by the National Weather Service.

When storm sirens are activated due to storm alerts, the siren consists of a steady tone for duration of three (3) minutes on, 2 minutes off, 3 minutes on. Sirens may sound multiple times during the warning. All activations of the siren will be of (3) minute on, 2 minute off, 3 minute on durations during storm alerts.

The County reminds residents that there is NO "ALL CLEAR" sounded by the sirens.