

Cedar County Outdoor Warning System Activation Protocol For All Jurisdictions within Cedar County

The Outdoor Warning System siren may be used by local government officials for peacetime emergencies, which can include severe weather. This policy sets the situations in which outdoor warning sirens may be used for such emergencies.

SEVERE WEATHER: Typically, the local fire department will receive notification of a severe weather event through Cedar County Dispatch or via other official notification from the National Weather Service. Local outdoor warning systems shall be activated in the event of the following:

1. Tornado - A **confirmed** sighting of a tornado on the ground, or a funnel cloud aloft, as reported by a trained weather spotter or member of law enforcement. Sirens should be sounded if a tornado is seen approaching the local community.
2. Thunderstorms – Approaching thunderstorms with **winds 70mph** or greater. These storms carry the potential to cause whole trees to snap or uproot.
3. Hail – Approaching hail with an estimated size of **golf ball sized** or larger. This size of hail has the potential to break household windows.
4. Order of Designated Official – The outdoor warning sirens may also be activated during severe weather by order of the County Sheriff, the Emergency Management Director, the local Fire Chief or their designated alternate. If the reasoning for the activation can be rationally communicated, it is recommended that the local fire department err on the side of caution in the interest of life safety.
 - A confirmed sighting is defined as a sighting that has been observed by a National Weather Service municipal or county employee or a National Weather Service trained Sky Warn spotter.
 - An unconfirmed sighting is a report that has been received from one or more members of the general public. A radio-equipped municipal or county vehicle should be dispatched to the area in question to investigate an unconfirmed report to determine if the report is valid. In the absence of a county or municipal vehicle, a radio equipped trained spotter can also provide such verification. Confirmation of the sighting will result in a verified confirmed report and shall be reported to the National Weather Service and the outdoor warning sirens shall be sounded.

PEACETIME EMERGENCIES OTHER THAN SEVERE WEATHER: The outdoor warning system will be activated upon orders from the County Sheriff, the Emergency Management Director, or the

local Fire Chief. The order shall be accompanied by a brief description of the area in which the sirens should be activated, along with the reasoning for the activation of the siren.

FIRE ACTIVATION: Fire Departments may set off the outdoor warning sirens in the event of a fire, at the discretion of the local Fire Chief or Assistant Chief. The Cedar County Sheriff's Dispatch must be notified of such activations as soon as possible.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

SIREN FAILURE: In the event a community siren fails to activate, the Fire Department may choose to use their emergency vehicles to warn residents, if they have time to do so and can do so safely.

REACTIVATION PROCEDURES: The outdoor warning system should be re-sounded for a new confirmed sighting, or from a second storm cell, that meets the activation criteria described above.

ALL CLEAR PROCEDURES: In keeping with the policy of the National Weather Service, the issuance of an "all clear" statement should not be issued by local government, and outdoor warning sirens shall not be sounded for an "all clear" situation.

Severe weather warnings, whether severe thunderstorm or tornado, are traditionally issued for periods of thirty (30) minutes to one (1) hour. Warnings are usually allowed to expire on their own, without early termination by the Weather Service.

Residents requesting "all clear" information should be advised to monitor commercial radio and television stations for further weather information. Individuals should be indoors during severe weather and monitoring local media for storm updates.

TESTING: All Outdoor Warning Systems within Cedar County shall be tested on a regular monthly basis. In the case of inclement weather on a scheduled test day, the community may opt to cancel the testing of the outdoor warning sirens. Typically, testing of outdoor warning sirens shall be between the months of March and November.

The following lists current testing dates for each of the jurisdictions in Cedar County. Should a community decide to change their scheduled testing date, this information shall be communicated to the Cedar County Emergency Management Commission:

City of Bennett	First Tuesday of the month at 10:00am
City of Clarence	First Tuesday of the month at 10:00am
City of Durant	First Tuesday of the month at 10:00am

City of Lowden	First Monday of the month at 10:00am
City of Mechanicsville	First Monday of the month at 7:00pm
City of Stanwood	First Tuesday of the month at 12:00pm
City of Tipton	First Tuesday of the month at 10:00am
City of West Branch	First Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm

The test shall be for the duration of one full cycle unless a special request is made by Emergency Management or the local fire chief for maintenance or sound testing purposes.

SIREN MAINTENANCE: All maintenance of the outdoor warning sirens shall be the responsibility of the jurisdiction holding ownership of said siren.