



Mississippi Emergency Management Agency News Release

CONTACT: 866-920-MEMA



Media Contact
866-920-MEMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEMA, NWS TO HOLD TORNADO DRILL OCT. 20

PEARL – The National Weather Service in Jackson will conduct a statewide tornado drill this month to make sure residents remember what to do and are prepared for tornadoes. The drill will take place at 9:15 a.m. on Oct. 20. The NWS will use the Routine Weekly Test on NOAA weather radio all hazards to simulate an actual tornado warning. Local emergency managers, schools, businesses and residents statewide are encouraged to participate in this drill due to the significant risk of severe weather that occurs in this region of the country.

If your weather radio does not sound a notification at 9:15 a.m., MEMA and NWS officials recommend conducting a tornado drill regardless, since some weather radios are not programmed to carry test warning signals.

“Unfortunately, tornadoes are constant threat for residents of our state. The April 24 storm cell that ripped through central Mississippi is an example of the devastating damage tornadoes can cause,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack. “Because our entire state is vulnerable, it is absolutely essential that all citizens are aware of this risk, closely monitor weather bulletins and take appropriate actions to seek safe shelter should severe thunderstorm or tornado warnings be issued by the National Weather Service.”

Mississippi has a long history of producing violent EF4 and EF5 tornadoes. Even with better technology and advanced warning times these storms can take lives and destroy homes.

“The National Weather Service is the agency which issues tornado warnings,” said Meteorologist in Charge Alan Gerard. “With the advances in technology we can give residents more time to react, but knowing what to do with that information is what saves lives.”

The following are tornado safety tips to remember all year long:

- Monitor a NOAA weather radio for the latest information. These radios can be purchased at most major retailers.
- Communities will be alerted to a tornado warning either through radio and weather stations or by a warning siren.
- In case of a tornado warning, take cover. Avoid windows and go to the lowest floor if possible. Cover yourself with blankets or a mattress to protect from falling debris.
- If not at home, go to an enclosed windowless area, crouch down and cover your head.

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- If in a car, get out and seek shelter. If no shelter is available, lie flat, face down on low ground and protect the back of your head with your arms.
- Do not panic.

For more information please visit us at www.msema.org or call our media line at 866-920-6362. Information is also available on the National Weather Service's Web sites: www.nws.noaa.gov, <http://www.srh.weather.gov/jan/>.

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