

Will County
Emergency Management Agency

**2009 Severe
Weather
Notification
Systems**



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Outdoor Warning Sirens

Probably the most common and widely recognized method of warning is through the use of outdoor warning sirens. They are used by communities for a variety of purposes:

- **Testing** - (1st Tuesday of each month at 10:00 AM)
- **Alerting** - (members of a volunteer fire department of a fire)
- **Severe Weather**
- **Major Hazardous Material or Chemical Spill** - (in the local community)

During emergencies residents will hear a 3 to 5 minute steady signal of the sirens, horns or other devices. When you hear the siren and are unsure what they are sounding for, **go indoors and tune your radio to one of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) Stations**, and listen for essential emergency information (see below).

DO NOT call local fire or police agencies to ask why the sirens are sounding. If it is an emergency, they are busy getting equipment and manpower to the emergency scene.

Remember, outdoor warning sirens are just that, out-door warning. The sirens are meant to be heard outside to signal you to go indoors and tune your radio or television station to the local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Station. As homes continue to become more energy efficient and sound proofing enhanced, outdoor warning sirens that once could be heard decades ago inside of a home can no longer be heard. That's why other means of warning are in place.

In Will County, an ALL CLEAR signal is **NOT** sent. That's why it's important to monitor your local radio station during times of emergency for further information. Too much confusion trying to differentiate between the signals can result from issuing an "All Clear". No activation of sirens occur for weather watches or "All Clear".

During times of severe weather the National Weather Service issues a Severe Thunderstorm Watch or Tornado Watch for a six hour period. The Weather Service may terminate a watch early if weather conditions change or the threat of severe weather no longer exists. Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and Tornado Warnings are normally issued for a period of one hour. Warnings are usually allowed to expire on their own, without an early termination from the Weather Service.

In Will County, when you hear sirens sound in your community, tune to your local Emergency Alert System (EAS) station for further information. Primary EAS stations for Will County include:

WJOL – 1340AM / WSSR – 96.7FM / WCCQ – 98.3FM / WRXQ – 1007.FM

If you have any questions, or would like further information on the outdoor warning sirens or any other notification systems, please contact our office.

Emergency Alert System (E.A.S.)

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a system that provides the President of the United States with the capability to provide immediate communications and information to the general public at the national, state, or local level during periods of national emergency. The EAS may also be used by state and local governments, in order to disseminate emergency information to the public in their area. AMBER alerts are also broadcast over the EAS.

EAS works by tying together governmental agencies with media broadcasting stations, in order to allow for immediate and direct dissemination of emergency messages.

The state of Illinois is broken up into 10 local areas. Will County is located in area 6, which also includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Grundy, Lake, and McHenry Counties.

Each area is served by 2 local primary stations, which will forward National and State EAS messages. The LP-1 for area six is WGN AM 720, and the LP-2 is WBBM AM 780. An additional station, WLS AM 890 is a primary entry point (PEP) station. The PEP can be directly activated by the White House in the event of a national emergency.

The Will County EOC also monitors these stations for alerts, as well as two others. The first of these is the State Primary (SP) which is the State EOC in Springfield on 45.44 MHz. The second is the National Weather Service NOAA weather radio out of Chicago, on 162.425 MHz. The NOAA weather radio link is the key entry point for severe weather watches and warnings to be put out on the EAS.

Cross monitoring of all these various information sources forms a "web" of redundancy in the event that one component of the system fails to forward the message. The automatic features of the EAS is one of the key advantages over the old Emergency Broadcast System (EBS).

Stations participating in the Will County EAS include:

Radio	WJOL – 1340 AM	WCCQ – 98.3 FM
	WSSR – 96.7 FM	WRXQ – 100.7 FM
	WJCH – 91.9 FM	
TV	Comcast Cable Systems	

Other Alerts and Information:

AMBER ALERTS (Missing / Endangered Children)

To activate the Amber Alert Notification Plan in Illinois, law enforcement agencies must ensure the following criteria are met:

1. Law enforcement must confirm a child has been abducted.
2. The child must be under the age of 16 or have a proven mental or physical disability.
3. Law enforcement must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
4. There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

WEATHER ALERTS

You will receive severe weather alerts when information from the National Weather Service has been issued affecting Will County. Due to the unique circumstances of each weather event, severe weather alerts will be relayed as deemed appropriate based upon to the type of weather event, the location, duration, areas affected, and other criteria determined at the time the weather event occurs.

GENERAL EMERGENCY ALERTS

Messages sent when there is a general emergency of interest to all or a significant portion of Will County. Such circumstances may include, but are not necessarily limited to hazardous materials releases, nuclear power station accidents, long-term utility disruptions, and national emergencies.

POLICE EMERGENCY ALERTS

Messages sent when there is an emergency situation that would immediately affect residents, such as a dangerous situation that would necessitate an evacuation, or to be alerted of a dangerous person.

If you have any questions, or would like further information on alerts or the Emergency Alert System (E.A.S.), please contact our office.

NOAA Weather Radio

What is NOAA Weather Radio?

NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day. Known as the "voice of the National Weather Service," NOAA Weather Radio is provided as a public service by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the Department of Commerce.

The NOAA Weather Radio network has more than 425 stations in the 50 states and near adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and U. S. Pacific Territories.

Why should I care about NOAA Weather Radio?

Thanks to NOAA Weather Radio, you'll always have the answer to the question, "What's the weather?" Also, access to potentially life-saving emergency information whenever you need it.

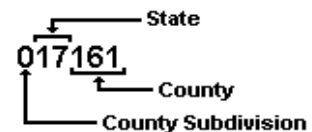
When you purchase a NOAA Weather Radio receiver, you are purchasing part of the National Weather Service network. The network is constantly upgrading its technology to provide the best weather reporting service possible for the nation.

For less than the cost of a new pair of shoes, you can own a special weather radio that provides instant access to the same weather reports and emergency information that meteorologists and emergency personnel use – **information that can save your life!**

NOAA Weather Radio Information	
for those in Will County...	
Frequency:	162.425 MHz
Channel:	2

FIPS Codes

Federal Information and Processing Standards (FIPS) codes for locations within Will County are assigned by township. By programming the appropriate FIPS code for your township into your NOAA weather radio, you maximize the benefit of only being alerted to emergencies that affect you directly. These codes are listed below:



- 117197 - Wheatland & Plainfield townships
- 217197 - DuPage township
- 317197 - Lockport & Homer townships
- 417197 - Joliet township
- 517197 - Frankfort & New Lenox townships
- 617197 - Troy, Channahon, & Jackson townships
- 717197 - Manhattan, Green Garden, Wilton, & Peotone townships
- 817197 - Monee, Crete, Will, & Washington townships
- 917197 - Wilmington, Florence, Reed, Custer, & Wesley townships

"ALL HAZARDS" Capabilities

NOAA Weather Radio now broadcasts warnings and post-event information for all types of hazards – both natural (such as earthquakes and volcano activity) and technological (such as chemical releases or oil spills). Working with other Federal agencies and the Federal Communications Commission's new Emergency Alert System (EAS), NOAA Weather Radio is an "ALL HAZARDS" radio network, making it the single source for the most comprehensive weather and emergency information available to the public.

Seconds Saves Lives!

Weather radios equipped with a special alarm tone feature can sound an alert and give you immediate information about a life-threatening situation. During an emergency, National Weather Service forecasters will interrupt routine weather radio programming and send out the special tone that activates weather radios in the listening area. The hearing – and visually impaired also can get these warnings by connecting weather radios with alarm tones to other kinds of attention-getting devices like strobe lights, pagers, bed-shakers, personal computers and text printers.

Who Needs NOAA Weather Radio?

Public safety experts agree: the receivers should be standard equipment in every home. They are especially valuable in places that are entrusted with public safety, including hospitals, schools, places of worship, nursing homes, restaurants, grocery stores, recreation centers, office buildings, sports facilities, theaters, retail stores, bus and train stations, airports, marinas and other public-gathering places.

Where Can I Purchase A NOAA Weather Radio?

Check with stores that sell electronics, or call the National Weather Service office closest to you. More information is available through the Internet at the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio Web Site

NOAA Weather Radio... Improving For The Future

Additional NOAA Weather Radio transmitters will continue to expand the nationwide network coverage to more rural areas. With new digital technology, life-saving messages broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio will now be targeted to a specific area, like a county or portion of a state, to bring more hazard-specific information to the listening area. Additional digital technology will provide automated broadcast capability for more timely service. Digital technology also allows these messages to be automatically received by all the communications industries of the information superhighway – broadcast, cable, satellites and other media – through the Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Alert System (EAS).

Receivers to Fit Different Needs

Weather radios come in many sizes and with a variety of functions and costs. Many of the radios *sound a tone alarm* and/or turn on the audio when severe weather announcements of emergency information are broadcast. To make use of the new digital coding technology, more sophisticated weather radio receivers will be required. Most NOAA Weather Radio receivers are either battery-operated portables or AC-powered desktop models with battery backup so they can be used in many different situations. Some CB radios, scanners, short wave and AM/FM radios are capable of receiving NOAA Weather Radio transmissions. Many communities throughout the United States also make Weather Radio available on cable TV and broadcast television's secondary audio programming channels.

Expansion Through Partnerships

The goal of the National Weather Service and other emergency preparedness agencies is to expand the reach of weather radio broadcasts to 95 percent of the U.S. population. Innovative partnerships between the Weather Service, private sector organizations and state and local governments are fueling this expansion. For more information about developing a partnership with the National Weather Service, contact your local Weather Service office.

If you have any questions, or would like further information on NOAA Weather Radio, visit www.nws.noaa.gov. If you have any questions about NOAA Weather Radio in Will County, please contact our office at 815-740-8351 or visit us on the web at www.willcountyema.org

Text Message Alerts

Will County EMA provides text message alert system. To sign up for the service visit www.willcountyema.org. After agreeing to the disclaimer, you can register your cell phone, or other wireless device to accept any messages and safety alerts that you would like to receive from the Will County EMA.

Once you are registered with Will County, you will only receive the messages that you've signed up to receive. You may return to the Will Alert site to edit your information whenever it is necessary, and if you deem it necessary you can remove your information from the Will County EMA database altogether.

Receive alerts for:

Emergency Community Alerts

24 hour a day notifications (i.e. Gas leaks, Industrial Accidents, Traffic Fatalities)

Emergency Weather Alerts

24 hour a day notifications (i.e. Warnings, not Watches)

Non-Emergency Community Alerts

Daily 7:00AM-8:00PM (i.e. Waste Removal, Watering Restriction, Mosquito Spraying, High Pollen)

Will County is providing this alerting service as a means of providing the public with emergency alert and notification information. This service works by sending a text message to your cellular phone when County officials determine that an alert should be issued.

Terms of Participation:

1. Your personal information is kept private and will be held in confidence with our local secured servers.
2. As the delivery of messages are dependent on a variety of factors, most of which are beyond anyone's control, The County of Will, the Will County Emergency Management Agency, the licensor of the software, and their agents can not and will not guarantee the delivery or the timing of any delivery of any message, wholly, or in part. Any participation in this program represents acknowledgement and agreement that The County of Will, the Will County Emergency Management Agency, the licensor of the software, and their agents shall not be liable for the failure of the delivery of any part of any message, or for any delay in the receipt of any message for any reason. The user holds harmless, the County of Will, the Will County Emergency Management Agency, the licensor of the software, and their agents.
3. There may be a cost per message for the receipt of a message, depending on your carrier's cell phone package. Please consult your carrier to determine what those costs may be.
4. It is your responsibility to sign-up for the service and maintain your information. You may choose to unsubscribe to this service at any time.
5. By clicking I ACCEPT and saving your information with us you agree to the terms of participation.

If you have any questions, or would like further information on the Will Alert Site, please contact our office at 815-740-8351

Telefax Notification System

The Will County Emergency Management Agency contracts with a provider to speed fax severe weather warnings and other emergency notices to municipalities, townships, schools, businesses and industries who choose to participate. Registration is completed on an annual basis, regardless of past participation. Those wishing to participate must have a 24 hour per day dedicated telefax line. That means the line can not be shared with a person or a computer modem.

The types of weather information that you will receive from our office include: Flood Watches and Warnings; Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings; Tornado Watches and Warnings; Winter Storm Watches, Warnings and Advisories; Wind Chill Factor Advisories; and, Heat Index Advisories.

Program Operation

When the notification system is activated the EMA Office will determine the most appropriate method of notification, a one-page notice, or a notice plus additional information provided by the National Weather Service or other provider.

Additional information will be made available during the event if information is determined by the EMA Office to be of value to your preparedness efforts.

The notification program is operated by the Will County Emergency Management Agency, and is subject to change by the Agency. This system is not designated to be a primary notification system, but a backup system for sensitive operations. Notifications are made by available EMA staff and, therefore, may be delayed if personnel are not in the Emergency Operating Center at the time a weather event is declared by the Weather Service. Additionally, due to equipment, it is possible that some notification may take fifteen minutes or more to be received by fax.

The EMA staff intends to do the best job that our capabilities permit. However, the user must realize that the weather system is not a twenty-four hour a day operation. At some times the EMA Duty Officer must travel to the office to activate the system.

Any file not updated annually will be deleted from the database. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office at 815/740-8351.

COMPLETED REGISTRATION FOR 2009 MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 27, 2009.

**WILL COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
2009 TELEFAX NOTIFICATION SYSTEM
APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

ORGANIZATION NAME: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE: _____

VOICE TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDE AREA CODE): _____

TELEFAX TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE): _____

*NOTE the telefax number provided must be a dedicated number and can not be shared with a modem or other use.

Choose 1 of the following to describe your Organization:

- School** (participating schools will receiving telefax information Monday through Friday – 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Additionally schools will receive information up until June 12, 2009. You will again begin receiving information on August 10, 2009, unless justification is provided. (i.e.: facility is staffed during the summer months and has the ability to retrieve faxes from the machine.)
- Not open 24 hours a day [Mon – Fri / business hours]**
- 24 hour per day operation.**
- Dispatch Center - we will transmit faxed information to the following agencies:_____**

As a participant you will receive watch and warning information on the following:

Flood Watches/Warnings – Severe Thunderstorm Watches/Warnings – Tornado Watches/Warnings
Winter Storm Watches/Warnings – Wind Chill Factor Advisories – and – Heat Index Advisories

DISCLAIMER: This system is not designed to be a primary notification system, but a backup system for sensitive operations. Notifications are made by available EMA staff and therefore may be delayed if personnel are not in the Emergency Operations Center at the time a weather event is declared by the Weather Service. Additionally, due to equipment, it is possible that some notification may take fifteen minutes or more to be received by fax.

**COMPLETED FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2009
AND SHOULD BE FAXED TO OUR OFFICE AT 815-723-8895
(PLEASE DO NOT FAX AND MAIL THE FORM – FAX FORM ONLY)**