



Governor John R. Kasich

American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health

Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety - Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute
Ohio Silver Jackets
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When the Sirens Sound, Will You Know What to Do? *Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 19-25*

COLUMBUS, OH – Last winter we had El Niño. This winter, it's La Niña – still a very mild and unusual winter, with minimal snowfall and ice accumulations, and multiple record-breaking days with temps in the 60s and 70s. Although Ohio has seen more spring-like weather this winter – to include the National Weather Service confirmed seven tornado touch downs in southern Ohio on March 1 – winter's not done with us yet. Seven northeast counties are under a **Winter Storm Warning** until Wednesday evening with 8-12 inches of snow predicted; 10 counties are under a **Winter Weather Advisory** until Wednesday with 4-7 inches of snow predicted; 39 counties until tomorrow, with snow accumulations varying between 1 and 5 inches. Click [here](#) for Current Ohio Weather.

In a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), Governor John R. Kasich is proclaiming March 19-25 as Severe Weather Awareness Week and encourages all Ohioans to learn what to do to protect themselves from spring and summer weather hazards and home emergencies.

As part of Severe Weather Awareness Week, as coordinated by OCSWA, the state of Ohio will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System (EAS) on Wednesday, March 22 at 9:50 a.m. During this time, Ohio counties will sound and test their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to practice their tornado drills and emergency plans.

According to Ohio Fire Code 409.2, schools must conduct tornado drills at least once a month whenever in session during the tornado season. Ohio's "tornado season" is April 1 – July 30. See the State Fire Marshal's [letter and emergency/drill form](#). Schools that participate in the statewide drill in March can usually credit that date as their required April tornado drill. Administrators can verify with their local fire chiefs.

What can Ohioans do during Severe Weather Awareness Week?

Know Ohio's Weather Hazards – Know the different types of weather hazards that typically occur during the spring and summer. Know how severe weather could impact your home, your job, your community. Ohio's springtime hazards include tornadoes, thunderstorms, floods, and even snowstorms through early spring. Visit the OCSWA website: www.weathersafety.ohio.gov to view current weather in Ohio, and to review severe weather safety and preparedness information.

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"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

Know the Weather Terms – Ensure that every member in the household knows the difference between a *tornado watch* and a *tornado warning*. A tornado watch means conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. A tornado warning is issued when a tornado is imminent or occurring. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, do not stop to take photos or shoot video. Seek safe shelter immediately.

During tornado drills or actual tornado warnings, remember to **DUCK!**

D – Go **DOWN** to the lowest level, stay away from windows

U – Get **UNDER** something (such as a basement staircase or heavy table or desk)

C – **COVER** your head

K – **KEEP** in shelter until the storm has passed

Many Ohio counties have outdoor warning sirens that sound during severe storm and tornado warnings. During storm watches or warnings, listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or TV or radio news for up-to-date weather information.

People also receive notification of severe weather and other emergencies through their cellphones and mobile devices. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities. WEAs can notify you of extreme weather warnings, local emergencies requiring evacuation or immediate action, AMBER Alerts, and Presidential Alerts.

Also the month of March is Severe Weather Preparedness Month. FEMA, the National Weather Service and OCSWA will promote flood, severe weather and tornado safety information.

Basic Flood Safety Tips

- Turn Around, Don't Drown!® - If you are driving and have come to a flooded area, turn around and go the other way. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to drive (or walk) through flooded roadways.
- Just 6 inches of moving water can knock over an adult. And 2 feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pickup trucks.
- If there is a chance of flash flooding, move immediately to higher ground. Flash floods are the #1 cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S.
- If floodwaters rise around your car but the water is not moving, abandon the car and move to higher ground. If the water is moving, do not leave your car.
- Avoid camping or parking along streams, rivers and creeks during heavy rainfall. These areas can flood quickly and with little warning.

During any weather event (flood watches, tornado warnings, severe thunderstorms), continue listening to local weather reports via radio, television or NOAA Weather Radio.

Additional [flood safety information](#) is available on OCSWA's page.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 16 agencies and organizations that are dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan and prepare for severe weather incidents and home emergencies before they happen. For additional information on tornado and other severe weather safety and preparedness, visit the OCSWA website at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.