

Be a Force of Nature

National Severe Weather Preparedness Week is April 22-28, 2012

Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by tornadoes and other types of severe weather, despite advance warning. In 2011, there were more than 1,000 weather-related fatalities and more than 8,000 injuries.



These tragic losses fuel the resolve to build a Weather-Ready Nation. Now is the time to take bold steps to build a nation in which the public understands the threat of weather, allowing communities to prepare in advance thanks to timely and credible warnings that translate into prompt, effective action. The result: fewer deaths and economic losses from severe weather.

Weather-readiness begins long before severe weather threatens. One of the first things individuals and communities can do is learn about their specific risk when it comes to severe weather.

Gather information about hazards by contacting your local emergency management office, American Red Cross chapter and National Weather Service forecast office.

Knowing and understanding this information ahead of time will help you prepare by understanding what types of disaster could occur and how best to respond and protect yourself. It is also critical to learn your community's warning signals and evacuation plans.

After gathering community-specific information, you can make a plan for when severe weather strikes. The plan should include two places to meet loved ones in case you are separated and an out-of-area emergency contact person as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if you get separated.

Social media can also be an effective tool for severe weather preparedness. A 2011 survey conducted by the [American Red Cross](#), the [Congressional Management Foundation](#) and other organizations, found that almost half the respondents said they would use social media in the event of a disaster to let relatives and friends know they were safe.

This is an important trend because research shows that people are most likely to take preparedness steps if they observe the preparations taken by others. Social media

provides the perfect platform to model preparedness actions for others.

There are many actions you can share with others via social media to show how to be a force of nature when it comes to severe weather preparedness, including:

- Posting emergency telephone numbers by phones and in cell phones.
- Installing safety features in your house, such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Inspecting your home for potential hazards (such as items that can move, fall, break, or catch fire) and correcting them.
- Having your family learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher; and how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity in your home.
- Teaching children how and when to call 911 or local emergency medical services number.
- Keeping enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least 3 days.

For more information on severe weather safety and preparedness, click on the following links:

National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov/safety.php

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

Ready: www.ready.gov

Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness: www.weathersafety.ohio.gov



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noaa.gov/wrn



FEMA