

Norfolk Insider

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“Severe Weather Awareness Week March 24-28”

It's Severe Weather Awareness Week and Region 11 Emergency Manager Faythe Petersen urges citizens to be prepared for the unexpected. According to the National Weather Service, the start of the severe weather in Nebraska in 2013 began March 19 and ended when an E4 tornado hit Wayne on October 4.

“People need to decide right now what they'll do if the tornado sirens go off. Families need to have a plan for what their kids should do if they're at a friend's house or if they're in a park or on the street on their bike. Talk about it now because you never know when a severe storm in Nebraska will happen,” said Petersen.



She suggests that a family agree on a meeting place and/or a person that they will all contact if for some reason they are unable to contact each other. If a basement isn't readily available then a plan should be discussed as to what would be the next safest place to go to. Teenagers need to know what to do if they are driving and the tornado siren goes off.

In preparation for the storm season there will be warning siren testing in communities across the state including Norfolk which give parents, teachers and youth a good opportunity to discuss severe weather

preparedness.

Petersen reminds Norfolk residents that the siren will consist of a long whistle blow. There is no all clear signal.

“The old policy was to sound an all clear siren. However, during a storm many years ago another siren was sited, the sirens were blown and citizens misinterpreted that as the all clear. Stay in your basements and listen to a portable radio or weather radio until you're informed that the danger is past,” Petersen said.

There were 17 injuries in Wayne last year as a result of the tornado that was 1.38 miles wide and was on the ground for 19 miles. According to the Weather Service, the most active hour of the day for tornadoes in Nebraska in 2013 was from 3-5:00 pm. Even though the most severe tornado was in October, May was the most active month with 23 tornadoes in Nebraska.

“People need to remember that most residents in Wayne couldn't see the tornado. It's a good idea to be aware that a severe thunderstorm can bring dangerous lightning and driving winds and rain that might mask a tornado,” Petersen said.

“It's always a good idea to keep aware of the weather. Educate yourself and your family now as to what are safe practices to use when severe weather occurs.”