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PUBLIC SAFETY POINT – SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

April showers bring May flowers, and the start of a season of severe weather. With March 26-30 being Severe Weather Awareness Week, there is no better time than now to begin talking about what to do during a tornado warning.

“As with any emergency, you need to plan now what you would do. Have a discussion with your family as to what you should do if you’re home alone and a tornado siren goes off,” said Trent Howard, City of Norfolk Assistance Fire Chief/Region 11 Emergency Manager.

He said a good plan for kids who hear the sirens go off is to turn on a radio, local television station, or open an app on your phone to hear more details of the warning as they head to a safe place. If they aren’t at home they need to find a nearby home or business with either a centralized room or basement and contact parents to let them know where they are at.

Howard said a tornado warning siren consists of a continuous siren which can last several minutes. The siren may be repeated as necessary, but there is never an all-clear signal. If the siren goes off again, it means that another tornado may be in the area or people are still in imminent danger.

He added that many times a person can’t see a tornado as it might be hidden in driving winds and rain.

“Stay in your basements, safe rooms or your pre-designated areas and listen to a portable radio, weather radio, or weather-related app until you’re informed that the danger has passed. Take shelter until you hear otherwise,” said Howard.

A testing of the tornado sirens in Norfolk will officially begin on Tuesday, April 3, 2018, at 9:00 am. Tests will continue throughout the spring and summer months and will be held on the first and third Tuesday of April, May, June, July, August and September.

As a part of Severe Weather Awareness Week, Norfolk will be participating in the annual statewide tornado drill on Wednesday, March 28, 2018, at 10:00 am. This drill offers a time for residents, businesses and industries to test their severe weather emergency preparedness plans. The morning drill will begin around 10 am, with the issuance of a mock tornado warning and activation of outdoor warning sirens about 10 – 15 minutes later. If severe weather is possible that day, the drill may be postponed or cancelled.