

DAKOTA COUNTY OUTDOOR WARNING SIREN POLICY 2015

Notification to the public

Outdoor warning sirens are activated to promote situational awareness for citizens of a dangerous or potentially dangerous weather situation or other dangerous hazard approaching a community. Upon hearing outdoor warning sirens it is important that all persons immediately refer to local broadcast media (radio, TV, etc.) for additional information.

As recommended by the National Weather Service, it is the agreed policy of Dakota County and the cities in Dakota County to activate their outdoor warning sirens based on the following weather related criteria:

Severe Weather

Tornadoes

- **Tornado Warning** issued by the National Weather Service and/or
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by local police or fire first responder

Severe Thunderstorms

- Severe Thunderstorm Warning issued by the National Weather Service that clearly report sustained wind speed estimates of at least **70 mph** for cities within the National Weather Service warning polygon box for the communities that are in the predicted path of the storm.

All Clear

There will be *no* “all clear” signal from outdoor warning sirens.

Siren Duration

Sirens will be activated for a three minute cycle; they will not sound for the entire duration of the warning. Sirens may be activated for an additional cycle if new warnings are declared for the area.

Other activations

Other activations for local life-threatening events such as nuclear, hazmat, terrorism, etc. will be alerted via the outdoor warning sirens per the protocol noted below.

DCC PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVATION

- A. Warning received for **Weather Related Emergency** from National Weather Service.
1. Advise the police agencies in the effected cities why the sirens will be activated.
 2. Activate the system with the sirens in the effected cities and send signal.
- B. Warning received for **Weather Related Emergency** from a local first responder.
1. Advise the police agencies in the effected cities why the sirens will be activated.
 2. Activate the system with the sirens in the effected cities and send signal.
 3. Notify the National Weather Service of the sounding and the reason (Severe Thunderstorm with wind speed criteria met, Funnel aloft, Tornado).
- C. Warning of a **Hazardous Materials or other Incident**.
1. Obtain accurate description of the area requiring protective action and, if appropriate, evacuation route(s) or shelter in place.
 2. Load the system with the sirens in the effected city and send the signal.
 3. Activate the community notification system for the impacted area.
 4. Send a teletype of the incident to surrounding law enforcement agencies including law enforcement agencies in neighboring counties that may potentially be impacted by the **Hazardous Material Incident**.
- D. Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant (PINGP) Emergency
1. The sirens in the 10 mile Emergency Planning Zone for the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant (PINGP) will be an exception. Federal Regulations require an activation of those sirens in the event of Protective Action Recommendations (PAR) are issued.

TESTING PROCEDURES

State of Minnesota policy is that counties and municipalities test their outdoor warning devices at 1300 hours the first Wednesday of each month. Counties and municipalities are encouraged to make advance announcements of each test through local radio, television, and newspapers.

- A. **All Sirens** - At 1300 on the first Wednesday of each month the Dakota Communication Center (Warning Point) will take the following actions:
 - 1. Monitor Metcom to receive and acknowledge the test from the MN State Patrol.

- B. **PINGP Sirens** – Sirens in the PINGP 10 mile Emergency Planning Zone will be tested based on the requirements set forth by Federal Regulations and in conjunction with the utility operators of the PINGP facility.