



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 12, 2016

Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7567

UPDATE: Kent County Emergency Management would like to remind Kent County residents that our outdoor tornado/high wind storm siren testing occurs on the first Friday of the month from April through October. Because we completed testing of Kent County sirens on Friday, April 1 (consistent with our long-standing policy) we will not be re-testing sirens on Wednesday, April 13 at 1:30 during the State's alert. We hope residents will take that time to think about their emergency preparedness plans.

FROM MARCH 30, 2016:

Tornado Warning Siren Testing Starts April 1
Michigan Severe Weather Awareness Week is Approaching

GRAND RAPIDS – Last year, storms and severe weather injured seven people and left \$130 million in damage across the State of Michigan. Kent County has a system of sirens meant to alert residents of high winds or tornadoes. Starting Friday, April 1 and continuing on the first Friday of every month at 12:00 noon through October, you should hear tornado alarm testing in your Kent County home or business.

If you don't hear the sirens April 1 at noon, please contact your local township or city office. Be vigilant whenever severe weather is in the forecast. While no location is completely safe from a tornado or severe thunderstorm, it is important to seek all possible protection. April 10-16 is Michigan Severe Weather Awareness Week. "This is a great time to review your severe weather plan, refresh your supplies and make sure you are prepared," said Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. "Check your flashlight and stock up on fresh batteries. Homes should have enough fresh drinking water for three days, canned food items and a can opener, an all-weather radio, and a first aid kit."

Plan in advance for disasters to know how you and your family will get to a safe place, how to contact each other and what to do in different situations. Determine a location where you would meet in an emergency, both near your house and further away, in case your neighborhood streets are closed. If a disaster occurs, it may be easier to make a phone call to a designated out-of-town contact, as phone lines may be overwhelmed. Make sure that person is aware that he or she is the designated contact. You should have a disaster plan for your pets as well.

Many smartphone apps can keep you notified of weather watches and warnings. Severe weather **watch** means the potential exists for the development of storms/tornados. You can continue your normal activities, but be mindful of changing conditions. Severe weather **warning** mean that storms are imminent or occurring. Move indoors to a place of safety. If it is a Tornado Warning, take shelter in a location on the lowest level of the building, like the basement, or in a small, windowless room at the innermost part of the building.

Let us know about the sirens in your community: take our survey at <http://vrm.cc/kcsirens>. To learn more about Michigan Severe Weather Awareness Week 2016, [click here](#).

(PLEASE NOTE: While some communities in Michigan plan to test sirens on Wednesday, April 13, at 1:30 p.m., Kent County will test sirens on the first Friday in April, as has been a long-standing policy in the County. The County will not repeat testing on April 13.)

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