

Outdoor Warning Siren Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What do the guidelines say?

Under the Boone County Area outdoor warning system guidelines, sirens will be sounded for:

- Tornadoes
- Severe Thunderstorms with winds occurring/forecast to be 70 mph or greater

The sirens may be sounded multiple times during the threat. There will be no “all clear” signal for the sirens.

2. What should I do when I hear the sirens?

Go inside to the lowest level, most-interior room of the structure and tune to NOAA All-Hazards Radio or the local media for more detailed information on the storm’s location, timing, and intensity.

3. When are the sirens tested?

Sirens will be tested on the first Monday of each month at approximately 1pm. If actual severe weather threatens that day, the test will be delayed until the next monthly scheduled test. Sirens may not be tested from December through February when ice and cold temperatures may damage the system.

4. Why can’t I hear the sirens in my house?

Sirens are an outdoor warning system designed only to alert those who are outside that something dangerous is approaching.

5. Why don’t the outdoor warning sirens sound an all-clear signal?

People should be indoors and monitoring local media or NOAA All-Hazards Radio for updates on the storm.

6. How often can I expect the sirens to sound for severe weather?

On average, the Boone County Area experiences approximately 5-15 storms each year that meet the siren guidelines.

7. Why were the guidelines developed?

When life-threatening weather is approaching, minutes or even seconds could make a difference. If people are unsure or confused about an alert, they may not respond quickly or appropriately. By adopting common outdoor warning system guidelines, confusion will be minimized, response time reduced, and lives will be saved.

8. How were the guidelines developed?

Emergency management officials from Boone County working with the Boone County Dispatch as well as law enforcement, fire departments, and other public safety officials developed the guidelines together in cooperation with the National Weather Service. Input on the draft guidelines was also sought from municipal and county officials from across the Boone County Area.

9. How can I get alerts when I'm at work or in my house?

For alerts indoors, every home and business should have a NOAA All-Hazards Radio. NOAA Radio is like a smoke detector for severe weather, and it can wake you up when a warning is issued for your area so you can take appropriate action.

10. Will the sirens warn me of every dangerous storm?

The safest approach is to be proactive and use all of the information available to protect yourself and your family from threatening weather. Nothing can replace common sense. If a storm is approaching, the lightning alone is a threat. Sirens are only one part of a warning system that includes preparation, NOAA All-Hazards Radio, and the local media.

11. Who activates the sirens?

Sirens are typically activated by city or county officials, usually the 911 communications center.

12. Who do I contact if the siren in my neighborhood is not working?

If your siren is not functioning properly you should contact your city jurisdiction. They will need to know the siren location and description of the problem in order to direct the maintenance/repair request to their maintenance personnel.

13. How can I get more information?

Boone County Alert Iowa:

https://entry.inspironlogistics.com/boone_ia/wens.cfm

Boone County Emergency Management:

<https://www.boonecounty.iowa.gov/government/emergency-management>

NOAA All-Hazards Radio:

www.weather.gov/nwr