

*If the sirens are sounding now, go inside, take shelter and if possible, turn on a weather radio, radio or TV to find out why the sirens have been activated. DO NOT call 911 for more information.*

*Only use 911 for emergencies.*

## OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS

Outdoor Warning Sirens, sometimes referred to as Tornado Sirens, can be an invaluable tool in warning citizens who are outdoors about impending danger.

In Clinton County, the siren system is located within the 10 Mile Emergency Planning Zone or EPZ, for the Quad Cities Nuclear Generating Station. All of the sirens will be sounded for the monthly test or for a Radiological Emergency. The six sirens located in the City of Clinton and the one siren in the City of Camanche will be sounded for severe weather or other emergencies.

The majority of the time, the sirens within Clinton County will be active for two reasons, Tornado Warnings & Severe Thunderstorm Warnings with warned winds of 70 mph or greater.

Below is a list of frequently asked questions and answers as well as the information from the “When Sirens Sound” pamphlet.

### General Siren Information

- What is the difference between a “Tornado Siren” and an “Outdoor Warning Siren”?
  - The terms “Tornado Siren” and “Outdoor Warning Siren” generally refer to the same thing. The more correct term to use is “Outdoor Warning Siren” because an Outdoor Warning Siren can warn citizens about more than just tornados. It is also important to note that Outdoor Warning Sirens are an outdoor warning system. The sirens are not designed to be able to be heard inside homes.
- What does it mean when a siren is activated?
  - The sirens sound when it is not safe to be outside. When you hear the siren go off, go inside, take shelter, and if possible, turn on a radio or TV for more information.
- Why can't I hear the siren in my house?
  - Sirens are designed to be outdoor warning systems. Many individuals can hear sirens in their homes, but that is not their intended purpose. Sirens are only one part of the warning systems used to alert citizens. Weather radios, which are better suited to indoor warning, are also part of the warning systems used to alert citizens. Most newer weather radios have the capability to alert citizens inside their homes about dangerous situations through an alarm function. Phone alerts like Alert Iowa are another great option.
- *When are the sirens tested?*
  - The outdoor warning sirens are tested on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m.

## Activation Guidelines and Protocol

- Who activates the sirens?
  - Sirens are generally activated by Communications (a.k.a. 911/PSAP)
    - Sirens can also be activated via a backup location
- With regard to weather, why would the sirens be activated?
  - A Tornado Warning
  - A Severe Thunderstorm Warning **WITH** warned winds of 70 mph or greater and/or golf ball size hail (1.75") or greater
  - The sighting of a Tornado by a reliable source (such as a trained weather spotter)
- Why are the sirens being activated for Severe Thunderstorm Warnings with warned winds equal to or in excess of 70 mph?
  - Winds of 70 mph are the equivalent to:
    - EF 0 Tornado
  - In response to straight line winds during a summer storm where the sirens were not activated and several people were injured or killed by damage from the winds.
  - There is a significant and real danger to life and property when winds reach approximately 70 mph
- Is there an "All Clear" signal?
  - There is no all clear sounding for the siren system. If the sirens are activated again, it is generally because of a new threat or a warning has expired and a new warning has been issued. When the sirens sound for a second time, it does not mean it is safe to come out of shelter areas.
- Are all of the sirens activated at the same time?
  - The siren system is activated for the six sirens in the City of Clinton plus the one siren in the City of Camanche at the same time for severe weather and other emergencies. The entire Constellation (Nuclear) owned system which includes rural areas near Clinton and Camanche will be activated for monthly tests and for Radiological emergencies.

## What to do when the sirens are activated

- What should we do when the sirens are activated?
  - Take shelter and if possible, listen to your weather radio, TV or radio for more information.
- How can I tell the difference between sirens that have been activated for thunderstorm warnings with 70 mph winds vs. a tornado warning?
  - There are not different siren sounds for 70 mph winds vs. tornado warnings. Each citizen must take personal responsibility for his or her own safety and find out why the sirens have sounded. Once again, the sirens are an outdoor warning system. Hearing the sirens just means it is not safe to be outside and individuals should go inside, take shelter and find out what is going on. If there is a severe thunderstorm warning, individuals must either read or listen to the text being produced by the national weather service to confirm if the sirens have been activated for strong winds.



***When Sirens  
Sound!***

***Take Cover  
and Tune In!***

# *WHAT DO THE OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS MEAN?*

No matter what you are doing, any time you hear an outdoor warning siren go off, you should always find shelter, take cover, and if possible, turn on a radio or TV to a local station for more information and possible emergency instructions.

One of the most common and widely recognized methods of public outdoor warning is through the use of outdoor warning sirens. They are used by local communities for a variety of purposes:

- **Testing** - 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at 10:00a.m.
- **Severe Weather** – Including Tornado Warning and/or Severe Thunderstorm Warning with warned winds of 70 miles per hour or greater and/or golf ball size hail (1.75”) or greater.
- **Major Hazardous Material or Chemical Spill** – To warn a local community about a release.

During emergencies residents will hear a 3 minute steady signal of the outdoor warning sirens. When you hear the sirens and are unsure why they are sounding, **go indoors and tune your radio to one of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) Stations**, and listen for essential emergency information (see the “Where Should I Listen for More Information?” Section).

## *HOW SHOULD I TAKE COVER?*

To “take cover” means to go inside immediately. The sirens sound when it is not safe to be outside. Make sure that everyone in your family knows the safest place to be in your home during an emergency.

During a severe weather emergency, a basement or another underground shelter is the safest place to be. If you do not have a basement, stay on the first floor and put as many walls between yourself and the outdoors as possible. Stay away from windows. No matter where you are sheltering, always try to shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture.

If you live in a mobile home, it is extremely important to identify the closest safe place to take cover and shelter before an event. If your mobile home park does not have a storm shelter, consider speaking with the owner or manager about building or creating one. During severe weather, mobile homes are never a safe place to shelter, even if they are anchored to a foundation.

# ***WHERE SHOULD I LISTEN FOR MORE INFORMATION?***

**DO NOT call 911** or local fire or police agencies to ask **why the sirens are sounding**. If it is an emergency, they are busy getting equipment and resources to the emergency scene.

When you hear sirens sound in Clinton County, tune to your local Emergency Alert System (EAS) station for further information. Primary EAS stations for Clinton County include:

## **East and Central Clinton County:**

KROS – 1340 AM/105.9 FM    KCLN – 1390 AM  
Mac– 94.7 FM

National Weather Service Weather Radio  
Alert Iowa

## **West and Central Clinton County:**

KBOB – 104.9FM    KMAQ – 95.1 FM  
KMAQ – 1320 AM

National Weather Service Weather Radio  
Alert Iowa

Remember, outdoor warning sirens are just that, outdoor warning. The sirens are meant to be heard outside to signal you to go indoors.

## Question and Answers about Outdoor Warning Sirens

### 1. *What is the difference between a "Tornado Siren" and an "Outdoor Warning Siren"?*

An Outdoor Warning Siren is the correct name for what people sometimes call a Tornado Siren. An Outdoor Warning Siren can warn community members about more than just tornados and can also be referred to as an All-Hazard Warning Siren.

### 2. *Why can't I hear the siren in my house?*

One of the most common misconceptions about Outdoor Warning Sirens is where individuals should be able to hear the sirens sound. Outdoor Warning Sirens are just that, an outdoor warning siren, and are not designed to be heard inside. Although some people may be able to hear them inside, most people cannot.

### 3. *What am I supposed to do when I hear a siren?*

When you hear a siren, take cover immediately in your basement, a small room such as an interior bathroom or hall closet. Go under a large sturdy piece of furniture such as a workbench, if it is available, and cover your head. If you are in a large building, go to the most interior portion of the building. Close all doors and stay away from exterior windows and doors. Monitor the radio or television if possible. However, you may not have time. Do not call 9-1-1 for information. Only call 9-1-1 if you have a life-threatening emergency. Sirens are not always used to warn citizens of approaching tornados, but that is what they are used for most often. That is why it is important to not only take cover, but to try and turn on a radio or TV for more information.

### 4. *When are the sirens tested?*

The outdoor warning sirens are tested on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m.

### 5. *The sirens are going off, it isn't the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, but it's a beautiful day, do I still need to go inside?*

Yes, anytime you hear the sirens go off and it is not the scheduled testing time you should go inside immediately. Remember, the sirens sound when it is not safe to be outside. As stated earlier Outdoor Warning Sirens are *most often* used to warn of tornados, but they are also used for other things as well. Outdoor Warning Sirens are an All-Hazard warning system. If you hear the sirens activated and it isn't because of a tornado it may be because of the following issues:

- ❖ A hazardous material spill
- ❖ A radiological release from the Nuclear Power Plant
- ❖ A levee failure.

### 6. *Should I call 9-1-1 when I hear a siren going off?*

No. Unless you have a life-threatening emergency you should not call 9-1-1.

### 7. *Besides hearing a siren when I am outside, how else can I be alerted about dangerous conditions in my area?*

We strongly urge you to purchase a tone-alert, Weather Radio – a radio that is designed to receive broadcasts from the local National Weather Service office. This is the best source of "Indoor Warning" you can have. Once you get a weather radio, you can program it to alert you of any watches or warnings in your area. We also recommend purchasing a weather radio that has SAME technology.