

Outdoor Warning Siren Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



1. When do sirens sound for severe weather?

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. NOAA radios, also known as weather radios, are available at most retail stores that sell electronics. For more information on NOAA go to <https://www.weather.gov/nwr/>

3. When are the sirens tested?

Sirens will be tested on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm.

4. How long should a siren run?

A siren should sound for approximately 3 minutes.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Who activates the sirens?

Sirens are typically activated by the county 911 communications center.

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

You can email firechief@ci.buffalo.mn.us or call the City of Buffalo at 763-682-1181 and they will take the information and let the appropriate people know.

11. The City of Buffalo is expanding, are there plans to add more sirens?

Yes, the city has a plan in place to add sirens as the city expands. The city is currently in the process of adding a new siren on the South side of Buffalo. We are also working on a proposal to add another on the Northeast side in 2022.