

2019 Severe Weather Fact Sheet

National Weather Service Lincoln, IL

Severe Weather Preparedness Week: March 3 - 9, 2019

- Weather Alert Radios will be tested at 10:00 am Tuesday March 5th
 - All NWS offices in IL will conduct a test of Weather Alert Radios at 10:00 am CST Tuesday 3/5/19 for Severe Weather Preparedness Week – and in conjunction with many local municipalities testing their outdoor warning sirens
 - The test will be sent to Weather Alert Radios and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) as a “Routine Weekly Test” (RWT)
 - **This will replace the usual Wednesday weekly test of Weather Alert Radios, for this week only.**
- The main themes for Severe Weather Preparedness Week are:
 - **Do NOT just rely on outdoor warning sirens to alert you that a tornado or severe storm is approaching. Have multiple ways to receive information** such as:
 - Weather Alert Radio
 - Portable radio with battery backup
 - Wireless Emergency Alerts on most smart phones
 - Cell phone apps that will send you warnings for your area
 - Local TV and radio stations
 - It is VERY important for people to be prepared for floods, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms all year in the state of Illinois.
 - In the event of a tornado, go to the basement under a sturdy piece of furniture or the stairwell. Otherwise, go to the lowest level in a small area, like a closet, interior hallway or bathroom without windows.
 - Do NOT take shelter from a tornado in a mobile home! Seek shelter in a sturdy building BEFORE the storm approaches.
 - Everyone needs to have a plan in mind regarding WHERE they would seek shelter from tornadoes and severe storms at home, work, and any location where people gather

- If flooding is occurring or imminent you may need to evacuate your home quickly. Remember the dangers of driving on flooding roads. **TURN AROUND...DON'T DROWN!**
- Check your insurance policies and make any necessary adjustments in the event you might suffer storm or flood damage
- Have an Emergency Supply Kit with extra clothing, money, water, non-perishable foods, medications, tools and flashlights

Severe Weather Impacts

- The **United States experiences more tornadoes than any other country** in the world! An average of nearly 1,400 tornadoes impact the U.S. every year.
- **Illinois averages 52 tornadoes** each year. Last year, 56 tornadoes were reported in Illinois resulting in 23 injuries and causing more than \$140 Million in property damage. Of the 56 tornadoes, 29 of them occurred on December 1st – which was the third largest tornado outbreak across Illinois in any month since 1950!
- Tornadoes in Illinois have killed 228 people, and injured more than 4,520 since 1950
- The biggest tornado outbreak in Illinois since 1950 occurred on **April 19, 1996**. A total of 39 tornadoes were reported on that day, including four F3 tornadoes. One person was killed, 74 people were injured, and property damage exceeded \$100 Million.
- High wind from **downbursts and straight-line winds** cause **more damage than nearly 75% of the tornadoes** that occur in Illinois! Illinois averages around 550 reports of thunderstorm related wind damage each year.
- **29 people have died from damaging winds in Illinois since 1995**. Since 2000 there have been 271 people injured in Illinois from severe storm wind gusts

Central / Southeast Illinois Severe Weather Statistics

- Of the top 20 counties with the most tornadoes in the state, **11 are in central or eastern Illinois**. These are:

Logan (ranked #2), **Tazewell** (#3), **McLean** (#4), **Sangamon** (#5), **Woodford** (#6), **Macon** (#7), **Champaign** (#10), **Piatt** (#14), **Douglas** (#16), **Vermilion** (#17), and **Mason** (#19). *[Data based on tornadoes per square mile from 1950-2018]*

- Between 2009 and 2018, the **top six months for tornadoes** in Illinois have been : June, May, April, February, December and March
- In the past 10 years, **72% of all severe weather events** (damaging winds, tornadoes and large hail) in central and southeast Illinois **had advance warning** by the NWS in Lincoln, with an **average lead time of 15 minutes**
- During the December 1, 2018 Tornado outbreak, 20 tornadoes were reported in central Illinois. **Of the 20 tornadoes, 18 of them had an average warning lead time of 20 minutes**. The EF-3 tornado that devastated the city of Taylorville was warned about **40 minutes before arriving!**

Severe Weather Warnings

- NWS Implementation of storm based warnings for smaller areas, and portions of counties, has resulted in an **85% reduction of false alarms across central and eastern Illinois since 2008**.
- Since 2013, NWS offices have put **enhanced wording in all Tornado Warnings**.
 - This is intended to improve communications of the anticipated threats and impacts of tornadoes. **Specific information in the warning will highlight the tornadoes that are expected to produce, or confirm the occurrence of, considerable or catastrophic damage**.
 - A **Tornado Emergency**, warning for the potential of catastrophic tornado damage, was issued prior to the EF-3 tornado that impacted Taylorville, IL on 12/1/2018.

Severe Weather Preparedness

- The National Weather Service's goal is to build a "**Weather Ready Nation**". The purpose of this initiative is to save lives as well as livelihoods. By increasing the nation's weather readiness the country will be better prepared to protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from weather-related disasters.

Visit our website at: www.weather.gov/Lincoln for the latest weather and river forecasts, warnings, current conditions, radar & satellite imagery, and climate information.