

2020 Severe Weather Fact Sheet

National Weather Service Lincoln, IL

Severe Weather Preparedness Week: March 1 - 7, 2020

- **Weather Alert Radios will be tested at 10:00 am Tuesday March 3rd**
 - All NWS offices in Illinois will conduct a test of Weather Alert Radios at **10:00 am CST Tuesday 3/3/20** for Severe Weather Preparedness Week – and in conjunction with many local municipalities testing their outdoor warning sirens
 - **NOTE:** Due to the extended outage of the Champaign NOAA Weather Radio we are encouraging people in east central Illinois to conduct tornado drills in conjunction with the testing of the 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:**
 - It is **VERY important** for people to be prepared for floods again this year!
 - The spring flood outlooks are indicating a HIGH likelihood of flooding on many rivers across the state this year. The flooding last year resulted in hundreds of MILLIONS of dollars in damage statewide.
 - 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. Most homeowner's policies do NOT cover flooding. The National Flood Insurance Program (floodsmart.gov) is the place to go for coverage.

- **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**
 - **NOTE:** Due to the extended outage of the Champaign NOAA Weather Radio we are encouraging people in east central Illinois to program their weather radios for alternate channels.
 - There is no alternate weather alert radio channel for those in Champaign County. We are recommending that people make sure they have access to alternate warning methods (listed below).
 - More information is available at:
<https://www.weather.gov/ilx/cmi-outage>
 - **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**

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 53 tornadoes** each year. Last year, 48 tornadoes were reported in Illinois resulting in 1 injury and causing more than \$2 Million in property damage.
- 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 515 reports of thunderstorm related wind damage each year.
- **43 people have died from damaging winds in Illinois since 1984**. Since 2000 there have been 274 people injured in Illinois from severe storm wind gusts

Central / Southeast Illinois Severe Weather Statistics

- **Illinois ranks 4th in the U.S.** for the most tornadoes per square mile, behind Florida, Kansas and Maryland. Nearly 50% of all Illinois tornadoes occur in central or eastern Illinois, even though this only accounts for 35% of the state's area.
- Of the top 20 counties with the most tornadoes in the state, **12 are in central or eastern Illinois.** These are:

Logan (ranked #2), **Tazewell** (#3), **McLean** (#4), **Sangamon** (#5), **Woodford** (#6), **Macon** (#7), **Champaign** (#9), **Piatt** (#13), **Vermilion** (#15) **Christian** (#17), **Douglas** (#18), and **Mason** (#20).

[Data based on tornadoes per square mile from 1950-2019]

- Between 2010 and 2019, the **top six months for tornadoes** in Illinois have been : June, May, April, February, December and November

Severe Weather Warnings

- In the past 10 years, **71% of all severe weather events** (damaging winds, tornadoes and large hail) in central and southeast Illinois **had advance warning** by the NWS Lincoln office, with an **average lead time of 15 minutes**
- 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.**

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.