

Sioux Falls Outdoor Warning System Question and Answer:

Q: Who is responsible for the outdoor warning sirens in Sioux Falls?

A: The City of Sioux Falls Emergency Management maintains an extensive system of outdoor warning sirens. The system is designed to be an early warning device primarily for persons who are outside.

Q: When is the City of Sioux Falls outdoor warning siren system activated?

A: The Sioux Falls outdoor warning sirens are activated when a tornado warning is issued by the National Weather Service for areas including the City of Sioux Falls. The system is tested on the first Friday of each month at 11 a.m.

Q: Is there an all-clear issued?

A: There are no “all-clear” outdoor warning siren activations.

Q: How many outdoor sirens are there?

A: The City maintains a system of 75 outdoor warning sirens and adds new units in new growth areas as needed.

Q: Do the outdoor warning sirens sound in both Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties?

A: The system is activated across the entire City in areas in both Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties, when a tornado warning is issued for areas including the City of Sioux Falls. Storms with tornadic activity are unpredictable, can generate multiple tornadoes and don't follow county lines or streets.

Q: Why don't I hear the outdoor warning sirens?

A: Outdoor warning sirens are not frequently heard in homes during spring and summer months for multiple reasons, including distance from the siren, homes being shut up with air conditioners running, and people being asleep during thunder, rain and wind. For this reason, Emergency Management officials highly recommend residents keep a programmable NOAA Weather Radio in their homes, preferably in the bedroom.

Q: What if the outdoor warning siren in my area is not functioning:

A: A daily communications test and monthly diagnostic test are conducted to help ensure system is operational. Contact Sioux Falls Emergency Management at 367-8753, if you believe an outdoor warning siren is not working.

Q: Are there other methods of warning?

A: The outdoor warning sirens are just one part of the overall warning system. Broadcast television, radio, NOAA weather radio, smartphone apps and common sense are also critical components that residents should utilize to receive timely warnings.