



BAY COUNTY
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To: **Area Media Outlets**

From: Bay County Emergency Management
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Date: April 13, 2012

Subject: **April 15 - 21, 2012 is Severe Weather Awareness Week in Michigan.**

"Severe Weather Awareness Week is a good time for families, businesses and schools to develop their own severe weather plans," said Bay County Emergency Management Coordinator, Chris Izworski.

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms, developing from major thunderstorms. According to the National Weather Service, they usually are preceded by very heavy rain and hail storms. A thunderstorm accompanied by hail means that the storm has large amounts of energy and may be severe. In general, the larger the hailstones, the more potential there is for damaging winds or tornadoes. Although tornadoes can occur at any time, during any month, Michigan's peak "tornado season" is April through July.

"Severe Weather Awareness Week is the perfect time to update and review your emergency plans, restock your disaster supply kits and practice your safety drills," said Chris Izworski. "The best defense when faced with tornadoes or any severe weather event is preparedness. Planning ahead and knowing what to do in the event of severe weather will lower the chances of injury or death or loss of property."

Know the difference between a tornado watch and warning:

A tornado watch is issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. Watches are usually issued for four to eight hours. During a tornado watch, review tornado safety plans and be prepared to move to a safe place if conditions worsen. Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for weather updates.

A tornado warning is issued by the National Weather Service when a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar or sighted by storm spotters. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, seek safe shelter immediately. Tornado warnings are usually issued for 30 minutes. Continue to listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for up-to-date weather information.

Lead Time:

There are several things residents can do to allow for extra time to react before a dangerous storm hits their area. When you're in the path of something like a tornado, minutes and seconds can mean the difference between life and death.

Bay County residents can receive National Weather Service watch and warning information on their cell phone by signing up for BAY Alerts. BAY Alerts is a free service for all Bay County residents. To register for BAY Alerts simply text the key words "BAY Alerts" to 69310 or log onto <http://bit.ly/BAYAlerts>.

Bay County's outdoor warning sirens sound when a tornado warning is issued for our area. When the outdoor warning sirens sound, seek shelter and turn on a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for more information. The Bay County's Outdoor Warning sirens are tested the first Wednesday's of every month at 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio. A NOAA Weather Radio advises people of severe weather watches and warnings. NOAA Weather Radio is a service provided by the National Weather Service. It provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information and forecasts from your local National Weather Service office. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts important forecast and warning information as quick as possible.

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