



# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MARCH 25, 2023

## MUSCOM TO PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILL

*Severe Weather Awareness Week March 27-31; be prepared at home and at work*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** - The Muscatine County Joint Communications Center (MUSCOM) will start the yearly testing of the Outdoor Sirens on Monday, April 3, 2023. The sirens are tested at 11 a.m. on the first Monday of every non-freezing month. However, the sirens will not be tested if there is severe weather forecasted for the testing day.

Muscatine County will also be participating in the Statewide Tornado Drill to be held in conjunction with Severe Weather Awareness Week. The Drill will be held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 29. The sirens will also be activated in conjunction with this drill.

For more information you can visit the National Weather Service (NWS) site at  
<https://www.weather.gov/dvn/>.

“The Statewide Drill gives businesses, schools, daycares and other facilities the chance to practice their severe weather procedures as we move into storm season,” Chris Jasper, Director of Muscatine County Emergency Management/911, said. I encourage all facilities in the county to participate in the drill.”

As a reminder to all citizens, during a severe weather event, the sirens are activated by MUSCOM when one of the following criteria is met:



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- Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service
- Tornado or funnel cloud reported by a trained weather spotter
- Severe thunderstorm Warning issued by the National Weather Service or a report from a trained weather spotter that includes:
  - Wind 70mph or greater and/or
  - Golf ball sized hail or larger

According to information from the NWS most fatalities during tornadoes or severe thunderstorms occur due to falling trees or large branches. 70 mph wind is the typical threshold at which large branches and small trees break. Hail also begins to break windows when it reaches or exceeds golf ball sized hail.

"Muscatine County follows the guidelines that are set out by the National Weather Service," Jasper said. "Due to the possibility of extreme danger from falling trees and branches we will continue to activate the siren system for Severe Thunderstorm Warnings that meet that threshold."

Sirens are designed to alert citizens who are outdoors of an imminent hazard and prompt them to go indoors and seek further information.

"We encourage the public to tune into local media outlets or listen to a weather radio during severe weather and ask that they limit the use of 911 to emergencies only," Jasper said.

Anyone that believes a siren is not working or malfunctioning can reach out to the Office of Emergency Management at 563-264-7142.

## Outdoor Siren Locations



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In cooperation with the Muscatine Area Geographic Information Consortium (MAGIC), a link has been created for Muscatine County residents to pinpoint where the outdoor warning sirens are located. Click on the following link to view the locations: [OUTDOOR SIRENS](#).

## Free National Weather Service Storm Spotter Training

It is an indisputable fact that real-time reports are critical in issuing warnings and saving lives according to the National Weather Service. Storm Spotters provide real-time ground-truth of local conditions - such as hail size, wind speed, tornado development, and local damage - to help warn the public. Even as new technology allows the National Weather Service to issue warnings with greater lead time, spotters will always serve as a critical link between radar indications of severe weather and what's happening on the ground.

For those interested in becoming storm spotters, the National Weather Service will be conducting both in-person and virtual (on-line) training. Classes cover severe weather hazards including thunderstorms and tornadoes, the general structure and movement of severe thunderstorms, identification of important storm features, and safety concerns.

All in-person and virtual classes are conducted by the NWS Quad Cities office, and all classes last about two hours. Classes are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required for virtual classes. Classes are appropriate for all ages, but ages 10 and up will likely get the most out of the training.

Click [QUAD CITIES STORM WATCHERS](#) for more information.

## Testing and Activation of the Muscatine County-Wide Outdoor Warning System

The Muscatine County Emergency Management Agency has established a Guidance policy for Testing and Activation of the Muscatine County-Wide Outdoor Warning System. As a reminder, sirens are used to alert those who are outdoors of an imminent hazard and prompt them to go



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indoors and seek further information. The information will be available to the general public through the county and other municipalities' websites.

For more information, visit the [Emergency Management](#) website, and follow them on [Facebook](#).

[Outdoor Warning Sirens FAQ](#)

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