



## **Sandwich IL Emergency Management Agency**

140 E. Railroad St.  
Sandwich IL 60548 815-786-2261  
*Tom Ciciora—Director*

### ***Outdoor Warning Device Activation Guidelines***

The City of Sandwich maintains six outdoor warning sirens for the purpose of alerting the public to enemy attack or other imminent hazards. These devices are meant for alerting people engaged in outdoor activities. The devices are not designed to be heard indoors.

The warning devices are part of a participatory system of multiple devices to obtain All-Hazards alerts: Broadcast radio and television, NOAA All Hazards Radio, SEMA's Traveler's Information Station at 530 AM, various Internet sources, and Wireless Emergency Alerts via cellphone.

The six outdoor warning devices are under the primary control of the Sandwich Emergency Management Agency. The devices are tested monthly on the first Tuesday at 10:00AM, per provisions of the Illinois Emergency Management Act (20 ILCS 3305/12), weather permitting. Test instructions are posted at the multiple activation points. If a test cannot be carried out due to potential or in-progress severe weather or other in-progress hazard, the test will not be rescheduled in that month. The devices are covered by an annual maintenance contract, executed by a longtime distributor of the siren manufacturer. This distributor conducts annual inspection and preventative maintenance of the equipment.

Per FEMA definitions, there are two alerting tones produced by the sirens: the ATTACK WARNING and the ATTENTION or ALERT WARNING.

(from FEMA Publication CPG 1-17)

An attack warning is a three to five minute wavering siren tone. An attack warning means that an actual attack or detected missile launch against the United States has been detected and that protective action should be taken immediately. *This signal will be used for no other purpose and have no other meaning.*

An attention or alert warning is a three to five minute steady signal from sirens. It generally means turn on your radio or television and listen for essential emergency information.

The attention or alert warning has commonly been used to warn of an imminent or approaching tornado. However, its use is deliberately not limited to tornadoes by definition. The sirens could be used for any condition where it is desirable to alert the public while they are engaged in outdoor activities, in tandem with other sources.

For the purposes of severe weather, the sirens will be activated:

When a tornado warning is issued for Southern DeKalb County and/or Northern LaSalle County, *provided* that the warned storm is actually a threat to the City of Sandwich. If the warned storm is moving away from the city or does not present an imminent threat, the sirens will not be activated.

When a trained weather spotter has sighted a funnel cloud or tornado that poses an imminent threat within five miles of the city.

When a severe thunderstorm warning is issued for Southern DeKalb County and/or Northern LaSalle County, and straight-line winds in excess of 70MPH are expected from a storm that will affect the city.

When SEMA receives damage reports indicating winds in excess of 70MPH are occurring in a storm which will affect the city.

The attention or alert warning will usually be sounded once for a given event. No "all clear" signal is either defined or used. Citizens should monitor local NOAA All Hazards Radio or broadcast media to be informed as to when it is safe to resume normal activity.

These are not absolute criteria, and the SEMA duty officer will act to provide necessary warning as needed. SEMA has access to NWS radar data feeds and is in direct communication with the National Weather Service forecast office in Romeoville for guidance during weather events. SEMA also maintains communication with its own weather spotters, along with those from other public agencies during severe weather events.

In case of other man-made or natural hazards, SEMA will take appropriate measures in conjunction with city government to alert the public in the most expeditious manner available.

*Incorporated by reference:*

*Illinois Emergency Management Act, 20 ILCS 3305*

*Outdoor Warning Systems Guide CPG 1-17 dated 1 March 1980, Federal Emergency Management Agency*

**NEW 13 August 2020**