

Indianapolis Department of Public Safety – DHS

Emergency Warning Systems

The Indianapolis Division of Homeland Security has the primary responsibility for alerting the citizens of Marion County. Alerts are to inform the public of current or forecasted threats.

1. **Outdoor Warning Sirens** – Marion County has a total of 168 outdoor warning sirens. These sirens are placed strategically throughout Marion County's 372 sq miles to provide 97% of audible coverage. The purpose is to alert citizens of a potential or current threat to public safety in Indianapolis/Marion County. The Alert is three (3) minutes duration. Citizens who are outside should seek cover or shelter immediately. If Marion County citizens are hearing Outdoor Warning Sirens this is a queue to seek **MORE INFORMATION** via radio, television or internet news media.

The protocol for activating the Outdoor Warning Sirens is as follows, we will activate sirens only affecting the **NECESSARY** threat area within Marion County. This will be determined based on information from The National Weather Service. This will typically be through a CAP Alert Polygon or designated division in Marion County.

Threat Criteria for sounding Outdoor Warning Sirens

- A. When the determined area in Marion County is under a **TORNADO WARNING** issued by the National Weather Service.
- B. When a public safety officer (Police, Fire, EMS) reports the sighting of a **FUNNEL CLOUD (a rotating column of wind NOT IN CONTACT with the ground)** or a **TORNADO (a rotating column of wind) IN CONTACT** with the ground.
- C. Confirmed reports of **IMMINENT DANGER** to life safety in Marion County.

The Sirens will be tested to ensure their functionality on the first Friday of every month being rotated from the 3 warning points in the County. Warning Sirens are one way of receiving alerts from Homeland Security officials, however there are other forms of notification that Citizens may also take advantage of.

Other Emergency Warning Systems

1. **NOAA Weather Radio** – The National Weather Service uses the EAS to broadcast weather advisories, watches and warnings across the nation. A NOAA weather radio is a small, AC/DC operated radio which is programmed to receive only the alerts meant for the area you are located in. They can be set at a high or low alert tone, and should be on at all times to allow for 24 hour notification. This will be the best way for citizens to be alerted of Weather related emergencies.
2. **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** – The EAS is used to announce specific emergency information. Many people have heard this alert system used on television and radio networks. You will know it is in use when you hear the loud electronic buzz followed by the words “This is a broadcast of the Emergency Alert System”. Stay tuned to your local media for further information.
3. **Special Media broadcasts** – DHS will alert the media of significant events during an emergency. Television and radio media outlets will relay the information as it becomes available.
4. **Mass Notification Citizens Alerting** - The Mass Notification Citizens Alerting is set up to inform the public about emergency situations, such as natural disasters, missing children, and other safety concerns that require immediate action. Residents are able to sign up at www.getreadyindiana.org to receive alert messages, which range from city and county-wide to specific geographic areas of the county. Residents will receive alerts of the situation and tell them what to do next to ensure personal safety. The Division of Homeland Security will be using a Federal Signal SmartMsg Citizen Alerting system to send alert messages via telephone call, text message, page, or email. Each person has the ability to choose which communication tool receives the messages.

Emergency Warning Systems Testing

Quiet tests will be conducted every week, through Division of Homeland Security by “polling” each siren online. This will not sound the sirens for any duration. An audible test would be conducted once a month at 11:00am, the first Friday of the month. This test will be achieved by generating a CAP alert test for a Tornado Warning. The sirens will then sound for a 3 minute duration alternating between battery and AC power each month.

The responsibility for this test will alternate between Marion County Division of Homeland Security EOC, MCSD Communications and Indianapolis Airport EOC. In case of potential severe weather during this test time, sirens may not be sounded so citizens would not be confused.