



Governor Mike DeWine

American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health

Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety - Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute
Ohio Silver Jackets
WCMH – NBC4

March/Spring 2019

Weather is an integral part of our lives, affecting both our activities and emotions. Science has proven a string of cold, grey and dreary Winter days can lead to depression. Yet we all know that hope Springs eternal. A warm Summer breeze often brings back pleasant memories. And cool, crisp Autumn days are remindful of a bountiful harvest. Severe weather, however, can have a dramatic impact on our lives. Winter storms wreak havoc on our travels. Spring tornados strike fear in our hearts, and strong Summer thunderstorms change our plans in moments, chasing us from the ball fields.

The Ohio Committee on Severe Weather Awareness has been around for more than 40 years helping Ohioans achieve a better understanding of the weather hazards we face, and the steps we should take today to help us weather the storm tomorrow. The committee chair rotates among various state agencies and other partners. Having served as a committee member for several years, I am pleased to assume the responsibilities of chair of the committee in 2019.

While this committee does good work, Ohio EMA's Kelli Blackwell carries the load, season after season, year after year. One of the highlights of the committee's year is the annual [severe weather poster contest](#). Kelli spearheads this event, where first through sixth graders can enter, and winners announced at an awards ceremony during the Ohio State Fair.

The committee's work also includes weather safety awareness. In this vein, several awareness campaigns occur each year. The Severe Weather Awareness Week is each year in March. This year, it is March 17-23. The highlight of the week is the statewide tornado drill. Schools, homes and businesses are encouraged to hold a joint tornado drill at 9:50 a.m. on Wednesday, March 20. In June, Lightning Safety Awareness Week is planned. This year, it is set for June 23-29. Late in the year, the week before Thanksgiving, is Winter Safety Awareness Week (Nov. 17-23).

The main message of these special weeks, and of the committee itself, is that there are small, easy steps one can take right now to protect themselves and their loved ones. Steps like having a preparedness kit (one for the house and one for the car); making a family communication plan, staying informed about the hazards prevalent in Ohio and knowing the difference between watches and warnings. For more information, please go to the committee's website, weathersafety.ohio.gov.

Making people aware of weather hazards and how to prepare for them is easy, getting them to use the information, and actually take those first steps is much harder. As this year's OCSWA chair, I only ask one favor: take these words, this knowledge, and actually DO something with it!

Sincerely,

Jay Carey
2019 Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Chair
External Affairs Officer, Ohio Emergency Management Agency