



Governor John R. Kasich

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 Department of Mental Health
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BE A FORCE OF NATURE AND PREPARE FOR OHIO'S SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK AND NATIONAL SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK

COLUMBUS, OH – The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) is proud to promote Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week and National Severe Weather Preparedness Week, March 3-9. As proclaimed by Governor John R. Kasich, both weather safety campaigns encourage all citizens to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards, especially severe weather.

"Ohio's weather is forever changing. We can have temperatures below freezing one day, then 50 degrees with strong winds and thunderstorms the next," said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. "When it comes to the weather, Ohioans are learning to be prepared for anything."

As part of a coordinated effort with OCSWA, the state of Ohio will participate in a statewide tornado drill and test its Emergency Alert System on Wednesday, March 6 at 9:50 a.m. During this time, many Ohio counties will sound their outdoor warning sirens. Schools, businesses and households are encouraged to practice their tornado drills and emergency plans.

During the weather safety campaigns, OCSWA encourages Ohioans to take the following safety measures to weather future storms and Be a Force of Nature:

Know Your Risk – The first step in being weather-ready is to understand the different types of hazardous weather that can affect where you live and work, and how the weather could impact you and your family. Ohio's springtime hazards are tornadoes, thunderstorms, floods, and even snowstorms through early spring. Visit the OCSWA website at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov to check Ohio's weather and to learn about severe weather safety and preparedness.

Know the Weather Terms – Know the difference between storm watches and storm warnings. For example, a ***tornado watch*** is issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the area. 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 television or radio newscasts for storm updates.

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A **tornado warning** is issued by the NWS when a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar or sighted by storm spotters. If a tornado warning is issued for your area, do not stop to take pictures or shoot video. Seek safe shelter immediately. Many Ohio counties have outdoor warning sirens that sound during storm warnings. Continue to listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or TV or radio newscasts for up-to-date weather information.

Pledge to Prepare and Take Action – You can prepare for severe weather and Be a Force of Nature by taking the Pledge to Prepare at either www.ready.gov/severe-weather or www.ready.ohio.gov. When you pledge to prepare, you'll have the tools to complete a family communications plan, put an emergency kit together (including checklists), and ways to get involved.

Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio and check to see if your cell phone is equipped to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts. Download disaster preparedness apps to your smartphone. The Insurance Information Institute and FEMA's Ready campaign offer apps to download for use before, during and after emergencies or disasters. Visit www.weathersafety.ohio.gov for additional information and to download apps.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 14 agencies and organizations that are dedicated in educating Ohioans about the natural disasters that typically affect the state, and how to plan and prepare for severe weather incidents and home emergencies before they happen.

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