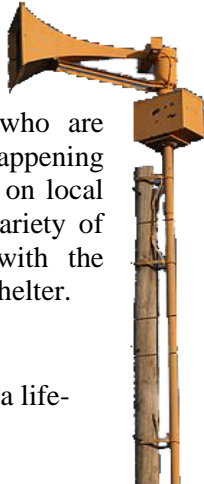


The Risk

Sleeping. Working. Playing baseball. Celebrating a graduation. The people most at risk in any severe weather situation are those who are not aware of the threat. Simply put: you must know in order to act! Once aware of an impending threat, you can take action to protect yourself, your family and friends, and sometimes even your property if time allows. Numerous types of warning systems exist, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

Outdoor Warning Systems

When it comes to severe weather, outdoor warning systems (often in the form of sirens) have one purpose and one purpose only - to alert people who are outdoors that something dangerous is happening and they should go inside. Depending on local policy, sirens may be sounded for a variety of life-threatening hazards, but always with the intent that people outdoors should seek shelter.



Benefits:

- Quickly notifies people outdoors that a life-threatening situation is occurring.
- Many people can be notified at once.

Limitations:

- Not designed to wake you up when you are indoors.
- Backup power capabilities vary by community.
- Can be expensive to install and maintain.

There are many variations and misconceptions in the use of outdoor warning sirens. Ask local officials in your area about outdoor warning sirens. Does your community have them? Why they are sounded? Do they have backup power? When are they tested?

Indoor Warning Systems

The primary indoor warning tool is NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards. Like a smoke detector, NOAA Weather Radio waits in a standby mode until a warning is issued. When the National Weather Service issues a warning, NOAA Weather Radios in businesses and households throughout the threat area automatically alarm and broadcast the warning, allowing people to take the appropriate actions.



Benefits:

- Alert function wakes you up so you can take action!
- Battery backup.
- Programmable for the area of interest.
- Details about the threat at the touch of a button.

Limitations:

- People must choose to purchase and use it.
- Not everyone has one.

Find out if a NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards station serves your area (95% of the US population has coverage!). Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio for your home and business. You may also want to consider a portable model for use outdoors or when traveling.

The Bottom Line

Living in the most severe weather prone country in the world, your best defense is to be both prepared and informed. Know the local warning systems; Invest in a NOAA Weather Radio; Stay informed; Take action – indoors or out!

On the web:

- NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards www.weather.gov/nwr
- National Weather Service www.weather.gov
- Red Cross Preparedness www.redcross.org