

# Warren County Hazardous Weather Operations Plan

June 1, 2014



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## I. LOCAL WARNING SYSTEM ACTIVATION PLAN FOR WARREN COUNTY

In the event of a weather emergency in Warren County, the following notification procedures have been developed:

- Warning Siren- Out Door Warning Sirens are located throughout Warren County within incorporated cities, and when activated can be heard for miles. These cities include: Carlisle, Hartford, Indianola, Lacona, Martensdale, Milo, New Virginia, Norwalk, St Marys'. In the event the sirens are activated, residents are urged to seek shelter and monitor their local radio, television, or other available means for important emergency information.
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) which is broadcast on local radio and television stations.
- Door to Door and drive by notification- In certain circumstances emergency responders may go door to door and drive thru neighborhoods utilizing public address systems and sirens to warn of eminent danger.

### Warning Siren Activation

Out Door Warning Sirens in Warren County may be activated for any of the following conditions:

- The National Weather service has issued a tornado warning for Warren County and or area specific.
- The Warren County Emergency Manager has requested activation of the sirens.
- The Fire Departments spotting request activation
- Law Enforcement spotting request activation
- Testing and maintenance operations

### Warning-Evacuation-Shelter plans for the disabled

Emergency warning systems within Warren County include the Emergency Alert System, along with emergency vehicle siren and public address systems.

This combination of warning devices provides the broadest level of notification to the residents of Warren County in the event of imminent disaster emergency; these systems however do not guarantee that everyone will receive the warnings. This may be especially true for those with sight and hearing impairments.

As a result, it is imperative that the sight and hearing impaired together with community organizations and facilities that provide disabled services, along with neighbors, friends and families develop emergency notification plans that complement existing warning systems. During major incidents the ability to conduct emergency search, rescue, and evacuation operations may be delayed as fire and law enforcement resources will be limited. Therefore it is recommended that the community organizations and facilities that provide services and housing to the special needs population develop and maintain emergency evacuation and shelter plans specific to the clients they serve. In addition, people with disabilities living independently should receive assistance from relatives, acquaintances or community providers in developing and managing individual evacuation and shelter plans.

Organizations that arrange for or maintain shelter facilities should include plans for housing people with special needs.

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## Preparedness

The most important survival tool is self-preparedness. Make sure you have enough nonperishable foods and essentials to be self-sufficient for the first 24-72 hours of a disaster. Sometimes emergency services become taxed beyond their capabilities and assistance is on a priority basis. It is recommended that your home disaster kits are a standard part of your preparedness plan.

## Procedures for reporting storm damage to the National Weather Service

To increase the ability of the National Weather Service to understand the characteristics of severe weather activity as it happens, it is important to provide basic storm damage reports from observers on the ground in “real Time”. Damage that needs to be reported includes:

- >1” hail
- >70mph winds
- Tornado activity
- Flash flooding

In an effort to provide this information to the National Weather Service (NWS), any available information from trained spotters as well as emergency responders in Warren County will provide the Warren County 911 Communications Center or Warren County Emergency Management with “real time” preliminary damage reports from the field.

This information will be passed on to the National Weather service office in Des Moines via:

- Phone 1-800-skywarn
- EMChat

## Warren County SKYWARN

To obtain critical weather information Warren County recruits trained spotters. These volunteers help keep Warren County safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather. Warren County Emergency Management has spotter training annually which is open to the public to attend.

## Warren County Spotters

If any threatening weather begins to track toward Warren County and is (2) counties away or less, the appropriate fire department(s) and law enforcement agency will be notified to provide spotter assistance. Spotters need to be in place before the storm and warnings begin to affect Warren County. Spotters have predesigned locations which will position them between the storm and the county. The following departments have the ability to activate spotters:

- The Warren County 911 Communications Center
- Warren County Emergency Management
- The National Weather Service

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## WARREN COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (EOC)

In the event of a natural disaster or any significant emergency affecting the county, the EOC will be activated by any of the Board of Supervisors, the county sheriff, or the county emergency management coordinator. Upon EOC activation, the emergency management coordinator reports directly to the county EOC and is designated the EOC Director (EOC-D). All county departments and municipal representatives will come under the Operational Control of the EOC-D. The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors or their designated representative shall be the County Disaster Preparedness Officer (CDPO), and will call into session the Executive Policy Group (EPG). The EPG is the decision making body for the EOC. The CDPO will chair the EPG. The EPG, as a minimum, will consist of the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors or their representative, the auditor or his/her representative, and the County Administrative Officer, and the county emergency management coordinator. Others may be added at the discretion of the CDPO.

### EOC Activation

Warren County must be able to respond quickly and effectively to developing events. When an event or potential event is first detected, the emergency management agency may initiate Level I activation (monitoring).

When a major or catastrophic emergency has occurred or is imminent, the County Board of Supervisors, or their designated representative, may issue a declaration of a local state of emergency. Such an action will activate immediately all portions of this Plan. In the absence of a local state of emergency, the emergency management coordinator may activate portions of this plan in accordance with the appropriate levels of mobilization to facilitate response readiness or monitoring activities.

After initial activation is accomplished, the CDPO will call together the executive policy group. While emergency response actions necessary to protect public health and safety are being implemented, the executive policy group will convene to provide guidance and direction to the CDPO to facilitate the rapid deployment of resources, fully activate the county's EOC, and implement this plan.

The executive policy group may through the CDPO, direct county evacuations, open shelters, and request state assistance. They may also activate mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties, and may broker mutual aid agreements between municipalities within the county.

### EOC Activation Levels

To facilitate the use of the EOC for disasters resulting from a variety of hazards, graded levels of response to varying levels of events have been identified. An event may escalate through the different activation levels sequentially.

- **Level I: Monitoring**  
Notification shall be made to the appropriate local agencies, municipalities and the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) who would need to take action as part of their everyday responsibilities.
- **Level II: Activation of Select ESFs and EOC Staff**  
Incidents such as storms, down airplane, major accident with multiple injuries, etc. Limited response required.

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This will be a “**LIMITED AGENCY ACTIVATION.**” This Level will be determined by the Board of Supervisors or their designee, the Sheriff or the Emergency Management Coordinator. The emergency management coordinator will be notified to activate the EOC. All primary or lead ESFs will be notified, but may not be required to staff their ESF station. The EOC will be staffed by representatives of the sheriff’s department, emergency management, emergency medical services, fire/rescue, and communications. Warren County 911 Communications Center shall inform the Emergency Management Coordinator (shall then direct the notification list).

- **Level III: Full Activation**

Catastrophic natural, technological or human-caused disasters that require all call response.

This will be a “**FULL ACTIVATION**” of the Warren County Emergency Operations Center and all ESFs. This activation will be determined by the County Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff, or the Emergency Management Coordinator.

## Location of the Emergency Operations Center

When activated for a declared State of Emergency, the EOC serves as Warren County’s central coordination, command and control point for emergency related operations and activities, and requests for deployment of resources. The command center is located at:

- 301 N. Buxton Street  
Indianola Iowa

## EOC Operational Focus

Emergency operations span three separate but contiguous phases: emergency response, relief, and recovery. For the purpose of this plan, operations will focus on emergency response and relief efforts and measures to be taken for a smooth transition into intermediate and long term recovery from a major or catastrophic emergency. The scope of these operations and response actions will include:

- Providing emergency notification and warning.
- Describing emergency mobilization procedures.
- Delineating emergency decision-making processes.
- Describing types and methods of implementation of emergency protective actions.
- Conducting rapid assessment of emergency impacts and immediate emergency resource needs.
- Providing security to the hardest hit areas.
- Coordinating information and instructions to the public.
- Conducting emergency relief operations to victims.
- Conducting preliminary damage assessments to determine the need for State and/or Federal Assistance.
- Summarizing procedures for requesting Federal disaster assistance.
- Relaxation of protective actions and coordination of re-entry into evacuated areas.
- Restoration of essential public facilities and services.
- Preparing for Federal disaster assistance (public and private).
- Coordination of resources and materials.

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- Coordination of volunteer organizations.
- Dissemination of information and instructions to the public.
- Restoration of public infrastructure damaged by the emergency or disaster.

## EOC Notification

Once the decision has been made to activate the EOC, notification of the EOC staff will be initiated by the Emergency Management Coordinator or other emergency management personnel. Primary notification will be through multiple systems including but not limited to telephones, cell phones, paging systems, computer networks, and radio systems. Each EOC staff member shall be notified that the “EOC has been activated” and that they should immediately report to the EOC. They will also be given a number to contact to verify receipt of this notification.

Emergency Management will maintain a current list of all EOC staff positions. EOC staff personnel will immediately report any change in their contact information to the emergency management staff. EOC staffing shortfalls and subsequently identified EOC staffing requirements will be filled by personnel from each of the county departments and personnel from the incorporated cities of Warren County. Every department will develop and maintain a contact list of personnel that would be available to fill needed positions within the EOC. Each department will maintain these lists current and provide a quarterly status to emergency management.

## III. TORNADO WARNINGS

The National Weather Service in Des Moines is the primary source of severe weather information for the public. The National Weather Service will issue tornado watches and warnings to the public at which time the Warren County 911 Communications Center will disseminate the information further. For specific information on notification see attached forms.

The Warren County 911 Communications Center is the outdoor storm siren activation control point for the warning systems in the following cities:

- Carlisle
- Hartford
- Indianola
- Lacona
- Martensdale
- Milo
- New Virginia
- Norwalk
- St Marys'

## IV. FLOOD AND FLASH FLOOD WARNINGS

Advance warning for flood events is critical in allowing citizens in Warren County to prepare for and respond to flooding situations. Primary notification will be via radio and television stations.

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## IV. FLOOD AND FLASH FLOOD WARNINGS (CONT'D)

The Warren County 911 Communications Center will disseminate flash flood information to all law enforcement and fire units through the paging system. Detailed flood prediction information and real-time river gauge data for Warren County is available through the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service at: <http://water.weather.gov/ahpss/>

Another source for data is through the USGS at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>

## V. SEVERE SUMMER & WINTER WEATHER WARNINGS

The National Weather Service in Des Moines will provide Warren County with advance summer and winter warnings via the NOAA radio, e-mails, or via phone. This information goes through the Warren County 911 Communications Center which disseminates to the departments within in the county.

