



NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS MARCH 12th AS TORNADO PREPAREDNESS DAY

Orange County Citizens Can Participate in Statewide Tornado Drill

Orange County, VA – During the past two years, 62 tornadoes struck Virginia, killing ten people and injuring more than 100. According to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management 12 tornados have been documented in Orange County between 1950 and 2007. To encourage tornado awareness and safety, Governor Bob McDonnell has proclaimed March 12th as Tornado Preparedness Day.

On March 12th, businesses and organizations, schools and colleges, and families and individuals are encouraged to practice taking cover from tornadoes during the Statewide Tornado Drill, set for 9:45 a.m. At that time, the National Weather Service will send a test tornado warning that will trigger a tone alert and broadcast message on NOAA Weather Radio. The message will be picked up by TV and radio broadcasters, simulating what listeners will hear during an actual tornado warning.

When the test tornado warning is sounded, participants should move as quickly as possible to a safe area in a sturdy building. Safe areas generally include: basements, interior rooms, bathrooms, closets or hallways on the lowest level of a building. In choosing a safe area, stay away from windows. Once in the safe area, participants should also crouch down or sit on the floor, facing down, and cover their heads with their hands.

“The best and fastest way for anyone to get a tornado warning is by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio,” stated Bill Sammler, National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist. “With a weather radio, you get weather data directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. When we issue a tornado warning, the weather radio sounds an alarm or flashes lights and then gives information on where the storm is, which way it’s moving, and informs people in its path to take cover. This radio could be a lifesaver.”

NOAA Weather Radios are available at electronics and sporting goods stores, discount and department stores, and online. They come in battery-powered models, and many also have AM/FM bands. A special-needs NOAA Weather Radio is available as well, and can warn



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deaf and hard-of-hearing persons of hazardous conditions, giving them around-the-clock, up-to-the-minute weather information.

For help in conducting a tornado drill and to register for the statewide drill, go to www.ReadyVirginia.gov. Although registration is not required, people participating in the statewide drill are encouraged to sign up to show their support. The annual drill is a joint effort of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service.

To view the Governor's proclamation for Tornado Preparedness Day, please visit: <http://www.vaemergency.gov/ready-virginia/stay-informed/tornado/gov-tornado-proclamation>.

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