



CITY OF MANITOWOC

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Public Safety Committee,

As Chief of Fire Rescue, I have the operational authority to determine the schedule and criteria for activating the severe weather sirens for the City of Manitowoc. Since it hasn't changed in quite some time, I am informing the Committee of my decision to change this criteria and seeking the Committee's support to do so. Currently, the City of Manitowoc is the only community in Manitowoc County with criteria that deviates from all of our surrounding communities. For example, all of Manitowoc County's weather sirens are set off for tornado warnings dictated by the National Weather Service. The city of Manitowoc sounds the sirens for tornado warnings but also has criteria built in for severe thunderstorm warnings. This places sounding the weather sirens off on fire department personnel who are not qualified or trained to make those decisions. Additionally, this also creates confusion for citizens and visitors about why the siren is sounding. This has been the subject of some (negative) discussion with the recent storms in Manitowoc County.

Unless the Committee dictates a different course of action, we will align with the County and other communities on this criteria. This creates consistency and removes confusion so when the siren sounds there are no questions as to the reason why or what precautions to take. This will also reduce confusion in the dispatch center, streamlining their protocols for siren activation.

Additionally, the City of Manitowoc should also align with the County's testing procedure. The County tests their sirens the first Wednesday of the month at noon while the City tests every Saturday at noon. This new operational determination will eliminate confusion, reduce wear and tear on sirens, create consistency in the county, and prevent the weather sirens from becoming white noise. An educational aspect would be included with the change. This has been discussed with the County's emergency management team on what that will look like in preparation for this agenda item.

No action is needed on this item unless the Committee wishes to overrule this operational decision. As a new Chief, I will continue the tradition of full transparency with the Committee and the public, which is why I have included this item on the Agenda for your review and discussion.

Thank you for your anticipated support,

Benjamin J. Kraynek

Fire Chief

FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

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Tornado Sirens

Several municipalities and the Point Beach Nuclear Plant within Manitowoc County operate outdoor warning sirens to alert residents of tornadoes, severe weather, or other emergencies.

NOTICE: Outdoor warning sirens are not designed to be heard indoors or wake people at night.

Click [here](#) for more information on other ways to receive warnings indoors and at night. The following is a list of municipalities with outdoor warning sirens:

- City of Kiel
- City of Manitowoc
- City of Two Rivers
- Town of Gibson
- Town of Mishicot
- Town of Two Creeks
- Town of Two Rivers
- Village of Cleveland
- Village of Mishicot
- Village of Reedsville
- Village of St Nazianz

- Village of Valders
- Village of Whitelaw



All sirens in Manitowoc County are activated for a Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) or if a funnel cloud or tornado is observed by an emergency response official, such as a police officer or firefighter.

Sirens in the City of Manitowoc are also activated at the direction of the City of Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department for Severe Thunderstorm Warnings issued by the NWS. Sirens in the City of Manitowoc use a steady tone for 3 minutes to indicate a tornado and a oscillating tone for 1 minute to indicate a severe thunderstorm.

If a siren activates and no severe weather seems imminent, tune to local radio stations for more information on possible non-weather related emergencies.

Sirens are tested regularly to ensure they are operating properly according to the following schedule:

- City of Manitowoc – Saturdays at Noon
- All Others – First Wednesday of the Month at Noon



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Receiving Warnings

Outdoor warning sirens, also known as “tornado sirens,” are not designed to be heard indoors or wake you up at night. NOAA Weather Radios, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), or smartphone apps are a more reliable source for weather and non-weather related warnings.

NOAA Weather Radios

A NOAA Weather Radio is a device, much like a smoke detector, that will sound a loud alarm when weather watches or warnings are issued by the National Weather Services or local emergency response authorities issue official emergency alert system messages. Weather Radios can be purchased at many local department stores or online for around \$30. **Weather Radios must be programmed according to the manufacturer’s instructions to the proper channel and location code, known as a SAME code.** The following channels and SAME codes should be used for Manitowoc County:

In northern Manitowoc County:

- Channel: 162.550 MHz
- SAME Code: 055071

In southern Manitowoc County:

- Channel: 162.525
- SAME Code: 055071

In southwest Manitowoc County:

- Channel: 162.500
- SAME Code: 055071



Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

WEA are short text-like messages sent to most smartphones and feature phones released in the last few years without the need to install a special app. They are sent for alerts issued by the President of the United States, alerts involving imminent threats to safety or life, AMBER alerts for missing children, and alerts conveying recommendations for saving lives and property. WEA is enabled by default on most smartphones and feature phones by default, but individuals should verify that WEA is enabled on their device. For iPhones, open Settings, tap on Notifications, and scroll all the way to the bottom to ensure that “AMBER Alerts,” “Emergency Alerts,” and “Public Safety Alerts” are all turned on. For Android devices, the settings will be found in a different place depending on what phone you have, but are generally found in the sound, notification, or display settings under “Cell Broadcasts” or “Emergency Alerts.”

Phone Apps

A variety of private vendors, organizations, and news media outlets produce apps that provide weather alerts or breaking news. **Be sure that any app you install on your smartphone sounds an alarm that is loud enough to wake you up at night and that you properly configure the app for your location.**

Everbridge

As of January 1st, 2025, Manitowoc County has switched to a Mass Notification System called Everbridge. Everyone with a cell phone will still get emergency alerts/notifications. With Everbridge, you will also receive notifications on your land lines if you have them. You are also able to create your own accounts in Everbridge, and we encourage this for a couple of reasons.

1. You can choose your alert notifications in your own language.
2. If you have special needs circumstances in your household, you can list what they are in the event there is an evacuation.

Once in, click on the sign up tab to begin. You can also call 920-683-4207 or 920-683-4360 if you need additional help.