

2019 ND Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week Fact Sheet

Are you Weather-Ready?

North Dakota Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week is set for April 29 through May 3, 2019. Awareness weeks in North Dakota are joint efforts of many agencies, including but not limited to, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), NDDES (North Dakota Department of Emergency Services), the North Dakota Broadcasters Association, your local emergency manager, and NWS (National Weather Service).

Local emergency managers and media partners get the word out about severe weather in North Dakota, helping people to be prepared. Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week is designed to heighten awareness about the coming severe weather season. In this case, to get us thinking less about winter storms and more about thunderstorm hazards such as lightning, hail, high wind, flash floods, and tornadoes. FEMA recommends in their "America's PrepareAthon!" initiative - Be Smart (informed), Take Part (practice drills), and Prepare (have a plan). Be Ready!

On Wednesday, May 1, we recommend practicing tornado drills in communities, at schools, at places of business, and at home. Each community, school district, county and Tribal Government will decide whether or not to practice drills and to what extent. Some schools and businesses / factories will conduct a drill for their students / staff / employees and some will not. Some communities will test outdoor warning sirens and some will not. The NWS has no authority over what action is or is not taken. That decision is left to local officials and business owners. We do, of course, recommend safety measures be reviewed and drills be practiced. Too many times when severe weather happens we reach for the camera rather than getting to our safe place. In some cases we are unsure of what to do because we did not take the time to prepare. As FEMA suggests, Be Ready.

Severe Weather Safety Training, known as SKYWARN, is volunteers who are trained in weather observing and reporting for NOAA's National Weather Service and its mission, the protection of life and property. SKYWARN is really one community (neighbor) helping another in the protection of life and property. We will also go over safety information so whether or not you want to be a spotter come out and learn about thunderstorms and the weather they produce.

SKYWARN training topics include...(see schedule link next page)

- *Thunderstorm formation
- *Thunderstorm hazards
- *Definitions (flash flood-tornado-funnel cloud-downburst winds-microburst-etc)
- *How to report severe weather to the National Weather Service
- *The importance of reports (how and what to report)
- *Safety
- *Storm type, strength, and structure

There are nearly 2,100 trained SKYWARN spotters in 36 counties in western and central North Dakota covered by the Bismarck NWS office. Every county and Tribal Nation has spotters.

Doppler RADAR is an outstanding tool, but it is not a video camera or camera at all, it does not “see” hail or wind, it does not “see” tornadoes, it does not “see” flash floods, rather, RADAR “indicates” those things. We need your reports, ground truth, to what is actually happening in your back yard and on your farm or ranch.

Statistics over the past 30 years for the United States show that on average each year there are 92 flood/ flash flood fatalities, 56 tornado fatalities, and 55 lightning fatalities.

Useful sites for information:

FEMA:

www.ready.gov/

ND State Government Response:

www.ndresponse.gov

ND Broadcasters Association link:

www.ndba.org

NWS links:

www.weather.gov/bis (NWS Bismarck)

www.weather.gov/bis/skywarn (NWS Bismarck SKYWARN training)

www.weather.gov/fgf (NWS Grand Forks)

<http://www.weather.gov/fgf/skywarn> (NWS Grand Forks SKYWARN training)

www.weather.gov/safety (safety)

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