



News Release

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Emergency Services

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Emergency Services Observes Severe Weather Preparedness Week

FAYETTEVILLE – Cumberland County Emergency Management is observing this week, March 1-7, as Severe Weather Preparedness Week in North Carolina. Citizens are encouraged to be aware and prepared for severe weather, which includes severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.

“While spring is the peak tornado season, severe thunderstorms can strike quickly throughout the year,” said Emergency Services Director Randy Beeman. “The best way to be ready is to plan and prepare. It’s critical to have emergency plans in place, put together an emergency supplies kit and listen for weather alerts.”

In 2014, the National Weather Service issued 81 tornado warnings for North Carolina and recorded 36 tornadoes that killed one and injured 34 people. Combined, the tornadoes caused more than \$22 million in damages. The National Weather Service also issued more than 632 severe thunderstorm warnings and recorded more than 686 incidents of severe thunderstorms with damaging winds and or/large hail.

Emergency Services officials recommend having a weather radio that broadcasts alerts from the National Weather Service whenever severe weather occurs. Many tornado fatalities have occurred at night when people are asleep and are less likely to receive a warning without a weather radio. Other safety tips include:

- Know the terms: WATCH means a tornado is possible. WARNING means a tornado has been spotted; take shelter immediately.
- Know where the nearest safe room is, such as a basement or interior room and away from windows, and go there immediately if you hear or see a tornado.
- If driving, you should leave your vehicle immediately to seek safety in an adequate structure. Do not try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle, and do not stop under an overpass or a bridge.
- If you are outdoors, and there is no shelter available, take cover in a low-lying flat area. Watch out for flying debris.
- Following a storm, wear sturdy shoes, long sleeves and gloves when walking on or near debris and be aware of exposed nails and broken glass.
- Be aware of damaged power or gas lines and electrical systems that may cause fires, electrocution or explosions.

More information on tornadoes and overall emergency preparedness can be found online at co.cumberlandnc.us/emergency_services.aspx or www.ReadyNC.org. You can also sign up for CodeRED, the free emergency notification service, on the county’s Emergency Services homepage.