Tulsa Outdoor Warning System

Emergency Sirens

What do sirens tell you?

Being prepared when disaster strikes can help save lives and property, prevent injury and decrease recovery costs.

Knowing what the City's warning sirens are telling you is part of being prepared for emergencies. Understanding the three siren tones can help you take the right action to protect yourself and those around you.

There are more than 80 in the city, each audible for up to a mile.

Tulsa's sirens use tones that warn citizens about tornadoes, military attacks and about chemical releases into the atmosphere.

There is an additional warning that is unique to this community. It is a flood warning tone which is not a part of the federal guidelines for siren warning systems.

Three types of sounds

First is the three-minute "steady" tone. It warns of impending tornadoes and of chemical releases into the atmosphere. It is a one-note tone. The only change in sound during the three-minute period may be an increase or decrease in volume that is caused by a change in wind direction or velocity.

(Hearing the steady-tone siren during pleasant weather may be a signal to protect yourself from hazardous materials which can be released by industrial or transportation system accidents. Depending on the material involved, and on wind and weather conditions, a hazard may be posed for a small area or a large area of the community.)

Second is the three-minute "wavering" tone - similar to the "wailing" sound made by many police and fire vehicles on emergency missions. That tone is used only to warn of nuclear attacks.

Third is the three-minute "high-low" tone - like that used by many European ambulances and police vehicles and occasionally by emergency vehicles in this country. It warns of impending flooding.

Upon hearing either the "steady" or "wavering" sirens, citizens should seek shelter and tune in to local broadcast outlets for additional information.
Upon hearing the high-low flood warning, citizens should avoid low-lying areas or any areas where flooding is likely to occur, and access local media for further information. When flood warnings are in effect, motorists should drive with caution and avoid driving in areas where water obscures road boundaries. They should also avoid driving through water that is flowing across roads.

Sirens are only a part of Tulsa's warning systems and are intended to warn people who are out of doors about impending dangers.

The warning system also includes local news media, NOAA Weather Radios and even some local wireless phone and pager services.

**Testing**

Tulsa's warning sirens are audibly tested each Wednesday at noon, weather permitting, as well as being silently tested daily. On occasion, technicians may test individual sirens at random times. Tests are typically one minute in length. Actual warnings are three-minute signals.