

For any questions on the outdoor warning sirens, please contact Saline County Emergency Management at 785-826-6511.

What is the Outdoor Warning Siren System?

Saline County has several outdoor warning sirens that are located in the incorporated areas of Saline County to include the cities of Assaria, Brookville, Falun, Gypsum, Kipp, New Cambria, Salina and Smolan.

The outdoor warning siren system is an effective method of outdoor notification, but Saline County Emergency Management recommends a duplication of ways to receive warnings and notifications. In other words, it is best to have more than one way to be warned of potential dangers. Warning and notification can be received by monitoring the following:

- NOAA Weather Radios
- Internet
- Cell phone applications
- Local Media Outlets (Television and Radio)
- Sky Conditions
- Outdoor Warning Sirens

Developed as an early warning system of severe weather to persons outdoors, the system should not be relied upon for early warning to individuals indoors. Air-conditioning, thunder, wind, rain, and other conditions can cause the sirens not to be heard indoors (even if sirens can be heard indoors during tests). Sirens are also subject to equipment malfunction as well as failure due to damage from lightning strikes. This is another reason to have numerous ways to receive warning and notification. Furthermore, sirens do not provide any information concerning the type of threat or exact location of the potential danger. For this reason, if you are outdoors and hear a siren, you should seek shelter immediately as the threat may be in your immediate area.

When are the sirens activated?

The outdoor warning sirens for any or all of the cities in Saline County are activated when the National Weather Service issues a "Tornado Warning" or when a local determination is made that a tornado threat to the area exists.

This determination is made by Saline County Emergency Management staff and will be based on the evaluation of all available information. This may include, but is not limited to, National Weather Service watch and/or warning text, weather radar and reports from trained weather spotters or law enforcement officers.

The emergency management on-call duty officer makes the decision to activate the sirens. If no such person is on duty or that person is not immediately available, the jurisdictional senior law enforcement officer on duty or fire department chief on duty will make the decision and order that 911 Emergency Communications Center staff activate the sirens.

The sirens are activated from the Emergency Management Operations Center or by the 911 Emergency Communications Center by computer or encoder.

Except for the monthly tests, the outdoor warning sirens are used to signal a "take cover" warning.

When are the sirens tested?

The outdoor warning sirens will be tested on a regular basis. The test will occur at 4:00pm on the first Monday of each month, weather permitting. If the weather is not suitable for testing the sirens, the test is moved to the 2nd Monday of the month at 4:00pm.

What do I do if I hear the outdoor warning sirens and/or when a Tornado Warning is issued?

If the outdoor warning sirens are heard anytime other than the scheduled test days, seek shelter and tune in to local radio, television, or your NOAA weather radio for instructions and information. Do not call 911 to ask for instructions!

It is important to remember that any thunderstorm can produce a tornado with little or no warning. When a tornado warning is issued or you hear the outdoor warning sirens, take the following immediate safety precautions.

In homes or small buildings: Go to a pre-designated safe area such as the basement (if available) or to an interior room on the lowest level, such as a closet or bathroom away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Upper floors are unsafe. If there is no time to descend, go to a closet, a small room with strong walls, or an inside hallway. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy protection (heavy table or work bench), cover yourself with some sort of thick padding, and use your arms or a helmet to cover your head and neck to protect against flying debris.

In schools, hospitals, factories, or shopping centers: Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest level. Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums and warehouses. Crouch down and cover your head and neck. Centrally located stairwells are good shelter.

In cars or mobile homes: ABANDON THEM IMMEDIATELY! Most deaths occur in cars and mobile homes. If you are in either of those locations, leave them and go to a substantial structure or designated tornado shelter.

If no suitable structure is nearby: Lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head. Be alert for flash floods!

What is the signal that storms have passed?

There is a NO "all-clear" siren. Listen to a battery-powered NOAA All Hazard Radios or tune in to a local radio or television station for updated information and to determine when conditions are safe.

I couldn't hear the sirens in my basement/home. Why is that?

Outdoor warning sirens are an effective method of *outdoor* notification. Winds, rain, hail, thunder, air conditioning and other conditions can cause the sirens not to be heard indoors (even if sirens are heard indoors during tests). This is why it is important to have more than one way to receive watch and warning information.



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