



Monday, May 4, 2026

OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS

Washington County Residents,

The Washington County Emergency Management Agency has recently fielded many comments, concerns, and/or questions regarding the Washington County Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS).

The Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS) are a valuable resource designed and operated for the purpose of informing citizens who may be outside of a structure during times when certain inclement weather conditions arise. These Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS) are not meant to be heard indoors, rather they are meant to advise citizens to head indoors to seek additional weather information. When an Outdoor Warning Siren (OWS) has stopped its activation, that does not mean that the inclement weather's threat has ended.

The State of Iowa Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security recommends that, when severe weather such as those listed below are indicated on RADAR, the Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS) will be set off automatically and/or activated manually by personnel from the Washington County Communications Center, for the communities projected to be affected. There is no longer a follow-up "all clear" siren that is set off.

- A Tornado Warning and/or Severe Thunderstorm Warning has been issued by the National Weather Service (NWS)
- Strong Winds of eighty (80) miles per hour or greater
- Large Hail of two (2") inches or greater

The testing of the Washington County Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS) will be conducted on the first Wednesday of each month at 11:00 am, unless inclement weather is present, to avoid confusion.

Residents are reminded to enable emergency notifications on your cellular device in "Settings", as well as to sign up for emergency notifications via the following programs:

- <http://www.safeguardiowa.org/>
- <https://www.smart911.com/smart911/ref/reg.action?pa=WashingtonCountyIowa>
- <https://ready.iowa.gov/>
- <https://apps.myocv.com/share/a133552353>

Thank you,

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