



NEWS RELEASE

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Sirens, mobile notifications warn residents of danger

Residents who are outside on Monday, Oct. 7 at 1 p.m. will hear a steady, loud noise as the City of Lockhart tests its automated outdoor warning sirens (OWS) that alert residents of impending severe weather and chemical emergencies.

“The five sirens are intended to provide early warning to people who are outside, even though you may be able to hear them in your residence,” said Lockhart Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Randy Jenkins. “The outdoor warning systems will always be activated using a steady tone, although the sound may fluctuate due to the rotating of the OWS head.”

The sirens are being tested on the first Monday of each month. Sirens will not be tested when severe weather has been forecasted or when a planned special event is being held. Canceled tests will not be rescheduled.

The sirens are automatically activated when the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning. Software has been installed that enables unattended auto-activation of all sirens when one or more of the outdoor warning sirens are included in a Tornado Warning polygon issued by the NWS.

The feature reduces the time to activation and provides alerts faster while freeing 9-1-1 dispatchers to perform other critical activities during emergency situations.

Residents who want to receive warnings while indoors or somewhere else where they may not hear the outdoor sirens are urged to sign up for notifications at www.warncentraltexas.org.

“You can go to the website or access the registration link by visiting the City of Lockhart’s home page,” Jenkins said.

Outdoor warning sirens are activated for the following emergency conditions in Lockhart

- The National Weather Service issues a Tornado Warning
- The NWS issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning and indicates the potential for destructive winds of 70 mph or greater

- Observed hail of 1.50 inches in diameter, or the size of a ping pong ball, or greater
- Any observed weather condition that is judged to be hazardous to people and in which an early warning would potentially save lives
- Chemical emergencies that could include railroad accidents, fixed facilities, explosives or radiological accidents.

When the sirens are activated for severe weather, people are urged to move indoors and seek shelter on the lowest floor and an interior room with no windows and seek additional information from local TV or radio stations. If inside a mobile home or vehicle, people are urged to seek a hardened shelter, or if one is unavailable, locate a ditch or low area and cover their heads. For chemical emergencies, shelter-in-place or evacuate if ordered to do so.