

# SEVERE WEATHER OPERATING GUIDELINES



## FOR DU PAGE COUNTY STORM SPOTTERS

PREPARED BY:

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## ***CONDITION BLUE - SEVERE WEATHER OUTLOOK***

The National Weather Service, Chicago Forecast Office will issue a "SEVERE WEATHER OUTLOOK" statement around 6:00 am on mornings when there is a potential for severe weather during that day. This OUTLOOK statement is updated at approximately 4:00 pm daily. A ***CONDITION BLUE*** will be initiated when there is a moderate or higher risk of severe weather.

Once notified that ***CONDITION BLUE*** procedures should be implemented, spotters should take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- \* Review severe weather procedures for your department or organization.
- \* Consider your plans for the day, and be prepared to respond to a call for weather spotting later in the day.
- \* Check your personal preparedness to make sure you are ready to respond, i.e. rain gear, car filled with gas, portable radio with charged batteries.
- \* Monitor sources of weather information and be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.



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## **CONDITION GREEN - SEVERE WEATHER WATCH**

The Storm Prediction Center in Norman Oklahoma will issue a "SEVERE WEATHER WATCH" (either thunderstorm or tornado) when conditions are favorable for the formation of severe weather.

A weather WATCH is usually issued for a period of 6 hours.

Spotters will receive a **CONDITION GREEN** notification via established communications systems from their respective organization.

Once notified that **CONDITION GREEN** procedures should be implemented, spotters should take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- \* **Review your community or organizations severe weather procedures,** and make sure you know what to do and where you are to go to spot weather.
- \* **Make sure you know how to report severe weather.** Review methods you are to use to make your report. Consider a primary and alternate method, i.e. radio and telephone. Review the National Weather Service Severe Weather Report Form to make sure you are aware of what information the Weather Service needs.
- \* **Be aware of safety issues.** If you are a spotter that will be dispatched to a field location, consider safety issues for that location including where you can go to take shelter if a severe thunderstorm or tornado approaches.
- \* **Monitor sources of weather information** and be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.



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## ***CONDITION YELLOW - SEVERE WEATHER ALERT***

A "SEVERE WEATHER ALERT" will be issued when a county detects the formation of a potentially violent storm, which has not yet reached the levels to warrant the issuance of a WARNING.

Spotters will receive a **CONDITION YELLOW** notification via established communications systems from their respective organization

Once notified that **CONDITION YELLOW** procedures have been implemented, spotters should take a few minutes to take the following actions.

- \* **If you are a stationary spotter.** If not already at your assigned location, go there. Do not leave that location unless you have communicated with your dispatch center to advise them of your actions.
- \* **If you are a mobile spotter.** Stay in constant touch with your dispatch center to advise them of your location with relation to any approaching storm. Be prepared to move to a location as directed by your dispatch center to obtain the best vantage point of the approaching storm.
- \* **Monitor sources of weather information** (NOAA weather radio, your department's two-way radio system, neighboring radio channels, amateur radio, etc.) And keep alert for information indicating that severe weather has been detected.
- \* **Report any weather event outlined in the Severe Weather Reporting Form,** using your department or organization's established communications system. If you are unsure about what you are seeing, study the sky for a few minutes. Report what you see with as much detail as possible.
- \* **Be especially alert** for the formation of severe weather in your area.
- \* **Monitor sources of weather information** and be prepared to initiate further actions if necessary.



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### **CONDITION RED - SEVERE WEATHER WARNING**

A "WARNING" will be issued by the National Weather Service following the detection, by radar or trained weather spotter, of a severe thunderstorm or tornado on the ground. A warning may also be issued for a verified report of funnel cloud aloft.

A "WARNING" is usually issued for a period of ½ hour to 1 hour.

Spotters will receive a **CONDITION RED** notification via established communications systems from their respective organization.

Once notified that **CONDITION RED** procedures have been implemented, spotters should immediately take the following actions.

- \* **Be particularly alert** for the formation of severe weather in your area. Pay particular attention to the area where severe weather has been reported.
- \* **IMMEDIATELY report any severe weather** that you observe to your dispatch center.
- \* **If you are in the field**, be prepared to leave your vehicle and move to your pre-identified place of safety if a tornado or severe storm threatens your location. Notify your dispatcher if you are taking this action.
- \* **DO NOT leave your location without communicating with your dispatch center.**
- \* **If a severe storm or tornado strikes the community, IMMEDIATELY report** the impact to the DuPage County Emergency Operating Center for relay to the weather service. Provide as much information as possible, but **do not hold up the report**. Communities in the path of the storm need to be warned!



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- \* **If a severe storm or a tornado strikes the community**, do not immediately leave your spotter location. It is possible that a second tornado may occur, and leaving your post may leave a portion of the community unprotected. Additionally, roadways may be blocked by debris and fallen wires. Wait for instructions from your dispatch center before leaving your post.
  
- \* **Continue to monitor sources of weather information** and be prepared to initiate emergency response activities if the storm impacts the community.



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## EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS FOR REPORTING SEVERE WEATHER

DU PAGE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATING CENTER  
(630) 682-7207

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE - ROMEOVILLE FORECAST OFFICE  
(815) 834-0666 OR (800) 681-2972



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
SEVERE WEATHER REPORT FORM



March 3, 2004  
03:31:53

### SEVERE WEATHER EVENT

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>TORNADO</b> On the ground doing damage			<input type="checkbox"/> <b>FUNNEL CLOUD</b> Airborne - Not touching the ground			<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ROTATING WALL CLOUD</b> Follow-up report needed in 5 minutes				
<b>STORM MOVING TOWARDS THE</b>			<input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> NE	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> SE	<input type="checkbox"/> S	<input type="checkbox"/> SW	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NW
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>HAIL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PEA = ¼	<input type="checkbox"/> MARBLE = ½	<input type="checkbox"/> PENNY = ¾	<input type="checkbox"/> QUARTER = 1	<input type="checkbox"/> GOLF BALL = 1 ¼	<input type="checkbox"/> BASEBALL = 2 ¼				
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>HIGH WINDS</b>			<input type="checkbox"/> 40-55 MPH			<input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 70 MPH			<input type="checkbox"/> + 70 MPH	
<b>WIND BLOWING FROM THE</b>			<input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> NE	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> SE	<input type="checkbox"/> S	<input type="checkbox"/> SW	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NW
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY RAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> FLASH FLOODING	<input type="checkbox"/> FLOODED STREETS & UNDERPASSES	<input type="checkbox"/> FLOODING OF SMALL STREAMS		<input type="checkbox"/> OVERLAND FLOODING					
<input type="checkbox"/> FREEZING RAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> SLEET	<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY SNOW - INDICATE TOTAL DEPTH _____			<input type="checkbox"/> BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW WITH CLOSED ROADWAYS					
<b>LOCATION OF SIGHTING</b> (Nearest intersection of Cross Street)			<b>NEAREST CITY</b>			<b>COUNTY</b>		<b>TIME OF SIGHTING</b>		
<b>SIGHTED BY (NAME)</b>			<b>AGENCY</b>		<b>CALL BACK PHONE</b>		<b>RADIO CALL SIGN</b>		<b>TRAINED SPOTTER</b> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>COMMENTS:</b>										
<b>INFORMATION RELAYED VIA</b>			<input type="checkbox"/> BROADCAST VIA RADIO			<input type="checkbox"/> TO NWS VIA PHONE			<input type="checkbox"/> TO NWS VIA NAWAS	
<b>TIME RELAYED / RELAYED BY</b>										

DUPAGE COUNTY OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT