

OUTDOOR WARNING SYSTEM



The City of Plano has an extensive Outdoor Warning System, comprised of thirty-six warning sirens and a system for overriding cable television programming. Our system is a network of 36 warning sirens strategically placed throughout the City. The sirens are not hard to identify.

They are 10-feet tall and mounted on 60-foot concrete poles. Below is a map, which shows the approximate location of the sirens.

This system is a **supplemental** warning system, designed to warn those who are outside, or who are in close proximity to a siren. As a supplemental warning system, it may not always be audible inside homes, buildings with a high ambient noise level (such as offices or factories), or when you are sleeping.

As a primary means of warning, Weather Alert Radio Receivers are strongly encouraged for every home and business. They are available from a variety of retailers, and typically cost between \$30 and \$80. These receivers sit silently until the National Weather Service issues a warning; at which time they

give out a loud alarm sound, followed by the specific warning message. The Weather Alert Radios can easily be configured

to warn the hearing and visually impaired.

It is imperative that you remain aware of the potential for severe weather, especially during the spring and fall storm seasons. By remaining alert, you can anticipate severe weather, and possible watches or warnings. If the potential for severe weather exists, be prepared. Monitor your Weather Radio or a local radio/television station for updates.

What do I do when I hear the warning sirens?

Remain calm , **go inside and seek shelter immediately** ; turn on your radio or television, or listen to your Weather Alert Radio.

Note: In this area WBAP Radio, 820 AM, is the designated Emergency Alert System (EAS) station. Most other radio and television stations will also broadcast information regarding emergencies. Those with cable TV may turn to PTN, Channel A30, for official information from the Plano Warning Center.

Listen carefully to the instructions.

Take whatever action is necessary to protect yourself and your family. Unless told otherwise, stay indoors until the emergency has ended.

And most importantly... Please DO NOT call 9-1-1 for information unless you are reporting a life-threatening situation or hazardous condition.

To ensure all systems are operating normally, the Public Safety Communications Department runs an audible test of the Outdoor Warning System on the first Wednesday of each month, at 12:00 noon. These tests will be conducted only if no emergency or threatening weather exists at the time. Test sequences differ from emergencies, so there will be no confusion about the presence of a true emergency.

In Plano, residents can experience a variety of emergencies, including the effects of tornadoes, civil defense and hazardous materials accidents. The Warning System would be used in the event the public needed to be notified of these situations.

During the test, you will hear the siren tone and a voice message will follow to announce that this is a test.

What else can I do to be prepared?

A little advanced planning will help you be ready, should an emergency occur.

- Prearrange a safe meeting place inside your home. You will want to find an interior room on the ground floor, with no windows or exterior doors.
- Keep blankets, water, non-perishable food, flashlight, and personal hygiene items readily accessible.
- Have your driver's license, checkbook, credit cards and cash ready.
- Make sure your car has at least a half tank of gas at all times.
- If you have one, keep your cellular telephone fully charged and ready to use.

Most emergencies are short-lived, but having made some simple advance plans will help ensure your safety.

How does the system operate?

The Outdoor Warning System is operated by remote control, from the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at

City Hall. A central control computer, operated by Public Safety Communications personnel, sends secure digital messages to each siren, telling the siren(s) how to operate. Once the siren receives this message, a motor turns the siren, broadcasting the warning in all directions.



The City of Plano's policy and criteria for activation of the Emergency Outdoor Warning System (OWS) is as follows:

1. Tornado Warnings from the National Weather Service, showing Plano in the path; or
2. Severe Thunderstorm Warnings from the National Weather Service with forecast winds over 73 mph; or Hail greater than This policy was developed in coordination with the National Weather Service (NWS) several years ago and is generally consistent with criteria used in surrounding cities in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.