

## **SEVERE WEATHER POLICY**

### **EMERGENCY ACTIVATION OF OUTDOOR WARNING SIRENS**

During a severe weather incident, our warning siren system will be activated in the event of the following:

- 1) A **CONFIRMED** sighting of a tornado, or funnel cloud aloft, reported by a trained weather spotter within five (5) geographical miles of Lansing borders or;
- 2) A **CONFIRMED** sighting, by a trained weather spotter, of severe winds causing structural damage within five (5) miles of Lansing borders or;
- 3) The receipt of a tornado warning, issued by the National Weather Service, **indicating that our community is in the direct path of an oncoming storm.**
- 4) Notification from any command staff member of Lansing Emergency Services (PD or FD) to activate the outdoor warning sirens

**A CONFIRMED** sighting is defined as a sighting that is observed either by a trained municipal employee or a trained weather spotter.

**An UNCONFIRMED** sighting is a report that is received from one or more members of the general public. A radio equipped Village vehicle (PD squad preferably) should be dispatched to investigate an unconfirmed report, to determine if the report is valid. In the absence of a Village vehicle, a radio-equipped spotter can also provide such verification. **CONFIRMATION OF THE SIGHTING WILL RESULT IN A CONFIRMED REPORT ISSUED BY OUR OFFICIAL OR SPOTTER.**

## **OUR WARNING SYSTEM**

The Village of Lansing has 4 outdoor warning sirens placed to maximize the sound coverage for the Village. They are located at:

- 1) 2710 170<sup>th</sup> St (Lansing Police Department)
- 2) Corner of 176<sup>th</sup> and Lorenz (Gus Bock Park)
- 3) 183<sup>rd</sup> and Holland (North West corner of Van Laten Park)
- 4) 188<sup>th</sup> and Burnham (Entrance to Erfert Park)

Severe storms typically have a forward speed of between 30 and 60 miles per hour. If a storm is moving at 30 miles per hour, sounding the sirens at 5 miles will allow people about 10 minutes to seek shelter or to take other protective actions. It is recommended that sirens not be sounded for sightings beyond the 5 mile area, because people will take shelter and after awhile, when nothing has happened, come out of the shelter areas just as the storm is about to hit.

Outdoor warning systems are not effective for warning in air-conditioned and tightly insulated buildings, and it is not economical to use such devices in area of low density



## **ALL CLEAR PROCEDURES**

**In keeping with the policy of the National Weather Service, local government should not issue an “all clear” statement.**

Severe weather **WATCHES**, whether severe thunderstorm or tornado, are traditionally issued for a period of four (4) to six (6) hours. The National Weather Service may terminate a “**WATCH**” early if weather conditions change and the threat of severe weather no longer exists.

Severe weather **WARNINGS**, whether they are for severe thunderstorm or tornado, are traditionally issued for periods of thirty (30) minutes to one (1) hour. **WARNINGS** are usually allowed to expire on their own without an early termination by the National Weather Service.

Residents requesting “all clear” information should be advised to monitor commercial radio and television stations for further weather information, but local government should not issue an “all clear” statement.

No activation of outdoor warning signals should be used to signify the termination of a weather watch or any kind of an “all clear” advisory.

## **SEVERE WEATHER REPORTS**

It is essential that we do something with any reports of severe weather. At this point, speed is critical as lives could be lost if a severe weather report is held up.

The first and most important step that must be taken is to ensure that the residents of our community are warned of the impending danger. Our community’s procedure indicates who needs to be notified/warned in the event of impending severe weather. The Village’s 9-1-1 Telecommunicators should be familiar with these procedures on issuing a warning to our residents, when the situation warrants. The Village’s 9-1-1 PSAP SOP’s clearly outline what the Telecommunicator should do to warn community residents and alert key municipal officials.

## **WARNING THE PUBLIC: ACTIVATING THE VILLAGE WARNING SYSTEMS**

When a confirmed report has been received, the most important thing that the Telecommunicator can do is to provide a warning to the residents of our community. That warning can be given via a variety of systems, including the activation of the Village of Lansing outdoor warning sirens, emergency alert system (EAS), tone activated warning receivers, squad car and fire apparatus sirens and public address systems, and mass notification systems.

The Village of Lansing has a clearly defined standard operating procedure that outlines who has the authority to activate the warning system and under what circumstances.

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## **STORM REPORTS**

The following is the minimal information that should be obtained from a person making a report:

- 1) What is being reported?
  - a. Funnel cloud aloft, tornado on the ground, rotating wall cloud, heavy rain, etc.
  - b. Is there damage associated with the report
- 2) Where was the event observed?

This needs to be as specific as possible- with cross streets identified. Make sure you know where the area is in order to relay that information through the communication system to the weather service.
- 3) What direction was the storm moving?

Be as specific as possible.
- 4) Who reported the event and when?

Get the individuals name, phone number or other method of contacting the individual. Also make sure that you record the time that the event was reported. Use real time, i.e.: 1530 hours, do not use 10 minutes ago.

A report should be forwarded from our Village of Lansing 9-1-1 PSAP, via the telephone or point to point radio frequency to the Illinois State Police district headquarters that has jurisdiction over the community (District Chicago). This report will be simultaneously forwarded to the National Weather Service and the regional communications center.

The National Weather Service has developed a Severe Weather Report form that should be used and sent to them by the internet at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lot/form.html>. This form is described in detail in Annex and a copy of the form can be found in Appendix C4 of the Emergency Operations Plan. This form should be photocopied and kept at the communications console for reference during a storm event. **NOAA Severe Weather Hotline Number: 800-681-2972.**

As a last resort, if it is impossible to get a report into the system in any other way, the report may be phoned in using one of the emergency numbers listed in the 9-1-1 PSAP's SOP's. It should be stressed that this should be a last resort only, as there are a limited numbers of phone lines, and telephone operators available to tack calls.