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## What is NOAA Weather Radio?

NOAA Weather Radio WXM-54 serves the San Luis Valley and surrounding areas with the latest forecasts and weather information 24 hours a day direct from the National Weather Service in Pueblo.

**WXM-54 operates on a frequency of 162.475 MHz from a transmitter in northwest Rio Grande County.**

The signal from the transmitting antenna to a receiver follows a direct line-of-sight path. With the varying terrain in the area, it's important to know if a receiver will be able to pull in the signal. **Reception is good to adequate in a part of southern Saguache County, eastern Mineral County, and Rio Grande, Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla Counties.** The quality of the receiver and whether it has an external antenna also determine whether the broadcast can be received in a particular location.

If you plan to gain access to the NOAA Weather Radio broadcast, you should buy a high quality weather radio receiver with all 7 VHF FM frequencies, which range from 162.400 to 162.550 MHz. That way, you can listen to any NOAA Weather Radio station nationwide, too. We also feel that the receiver should have a jack that allows you to attach an external antenna for best reception, a battery backup, and a warning alarm. A receiver with these features is priced around \$50.

The warning alarm on NOAA Weather Radio is now county-specific. So, if you buy a special weather radio receiver, you can have the warning alarm sound only for those counties that you program into the unit. This feature will encourage more people to keep their receiver in standby mode, because they know it will only alarm when they are in imminent danger, not for a storm two counties away.

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## NOAA Weather Radio Warning Alarm

During times of severe weather, the National Weather Service will interrupt the routine broadcast with live broadcasts of severe weather watches and warnings and timely updates of ongoing hazardous and severe weather in the area. When watches and warnings are broadcast live, the National Weather Service in Pueblo activates the specially designed warning receivers. These receivers either sound an alarm, which you must deactivate to hear the emergency message, or they operate in a muted mode and are automatically turned on so the emergency message can be heard. The "Warning Alarm" is a valuable feature and can now be county-specific. Now, all weather radio receivers, no matter where they are in our warning area, are activated whenever specific watches or warnings for any county are broadcast. County-programmable weather radio receivers will only be activated when there is hazardous weather in those counties programmed into the unit.

**The WXM-54 warning alarm will be activated for selected warnings, watches, and statements in effect for Saguache, Mineral, Rio Grande, Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla Counties.**

Weather radio is also considered an "all hazards" warning system. Through Federal, State, or local officials, the warning alarm can also be activated upon request for a nuclear accident, toxic spill, or other hazardous events to help with an evacuation effort.

Tests of the warning alarm are conducted every Wednesday between 11 a.m. and noon, unless severe weather is in progress or is expected. A brief exercise is conducted every day but Wednesday shortly after 11 a.m. in cooperation with the Emergency Alert System.

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## Weather Spotter Training and Public Safety Talks

NOAA Weather Radio can warn you of approaching severe weather. Most of the time the National Weather Service in Pueblo will issue a weather warning based on indications from our Doppler radar and before severe weather occurs. After we issue a warning, Weather Spotter reports from concerned citizens, like you, help to confirm the weather danger. Occasionally a weather spotter will alert the Pueblo office to severe weather for which we have not yet issued a warning.

National Weather Service personnel will be glad to conduct Weather Spotter training for emergency government, police and fire departments, amateur radio groups, and other interested public and private groups.

Weather Spotters provide the National Weather Service with valuable information during times of severe weather to help us provide timely warnings for the public. For information on scheduling a Weather Spotter training session, or a Public Safety session for the general public, contact:

**National Weather Service  
3 Eaton Way  
Pueblo, CO 81001-4856  
589 - 3232**