



NOAA Knows...

Weather Radio

The NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards saves lives by providing immediate broadcasts of severe weather warnings and civil emergency messages and giving those in harm's way critical lead time to respond and remain safe. Tornado warnings, flood warnings, AMBER Alerts for child abductions, chemical spill messages and many other notifications, in addition to routine weather observations and forecasts, make NOAA Weather Radio an essential item for every home, business and public area.

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, a component of the nation's Emergency Alert System, is comprised of a nationwide network of more than 1,000 transmitters directly linked with one of the 123 local offices of NOAA's National Weather Service, which issues weather warnings and relays civil emergency messages on behalf of law enforcement agencies. NOAA Weather Radio is provided as a public service by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

NOAA Weather Radio Features

- ▶ **Tone Alarm:** Special tones precede the initial broadcast of all emergency announcements regarding immediate weather threats and civil emergency messages to gain a listener's attention. These tones also will activate radios that are on alert mode, yet silent. This feature is especially crucial when severe storms or other events occur at night when most people are sound asleep.



- ▶ **Size:** Units are small (about the size of a clock radio) and require little space on a nightstand or table. They travel easily (vacations, relocations) and will use the signal from a nearby transmitter.
- ▶ **Battery Backup:** Ensures continued service during a loss of electricity, which can disable the warning capabilities of television and the Internet.
- ▶ **Customization:** Most models featuring SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) technology can be programmed to sound select alerts for select areas—in essence, broadcasting messages that only apply to the local area.
- ▶ **Accessories:** Many radios allow customization for an external antenna to improve reception; and for devices for the hearing or visually impaired, such as strobe lights, pagers, or bed shakers.

Receivers carrying the **Public Alert** logo meet industry standards, including SAME and a battery backup, as set by the Consumer Electronics Association.

Purchasing NOAA Weather Radios

Units that receive the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards signal are available at many electronic retail stores, marine supply stores, mail order catalogs and the Internet. Prices vary by model and available options, but typically range between \$20 and \$80.

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NOAA Weather Radio Success Stories

On January 10, 2008, a warning issued through NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards provided more than 40 minutes advance notice of an approaching tornado to Caledonia School principal Mike Putnam in Lowndes County, Miss. This provided Putnam enough time to move 115 students from the gymnasium and vocational tech building to safer hallways in the main building of the complex. The powerful tornado, with winds up to 155 mph, nearly destroyed the gymnasium and vocational tech building, flipped 20 cars, and tossed a school bus on top of a building. Because of his NOAA Weather Radio and quick thinking, Putnam saved many lives and only three injuries were reported.

Severe weather raking parts of Mississippi on April 6, 2005, prompted NOAA's National Weather Service to issue a tornado warning for Smith County. In the tornado's path was the Mize Attendance Center (a Kindergarten through 12th grade complex). Alan Gerard, warning coordination meteorologist with NOAA's National Weather Service in Jackson, Miss., said "the school principals received the tornado warning via NOAA Weather Radio. Once the warning was issued, they activated their emergency plan, which included getting all of the students on the upper level down into the lower level interior hallways." While the tornado tore off the building's roof and damaged the upper floor and windows, there were no injuries among the 650 students.

Charles F. Johnson Elementary School in Endicott, N.Y., reaped the benefits of NOAA Weather Radio on June 6, 2005. Thunderstorm winds of up to 70 mph tore the roof off of the kindergarten wing and devastated the building. The National Weather Service office in Binghamton, N.Y., issued a severe thunderstorm warning 22 minutes before the storm struck the school. The warning activated the alarm on the school's All Hazards receiver and gave school officials enough time to evacuate 340 students, faculty, and staff to designated

"storm-safe" areas. "Over 20 minutes of advanced warning enabled us to execute our severe weather safety plan, which in turn saved lives and prevented injuries," said William Tomic, principal of Charles F. Johnson Elementary School.



When an AMBER Alert, relayed by the Illinois State Police in August 2006, was broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio, it triggered the Emergency Alert System and the alert was transmitted to commercial radio stations. Listening to the radio at the time, the suspect described in the alert heard the message, contacted the authorities and turned himself in.

An AMBER Alert issued in Texas following the kidnapping of a 14-year-old girl from Nevada in October 2002 was heard by a truck driver over NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards. The driver spotted the white pickup truck described in the alert and dialed 911. Officers from Atascosa County, Texas, responded and pulled over the pickup truck. The kidnapped child was found inside, in good condition, and the two suspects were placed in custody.

A tornado warning heard over NOAA Weather Radio activated the severe weather plan of the Parsons Manufacturing plant near Roanoke, Ill., on July 13, 2004. Timely warning of an approaching severe thunderstorm and the tornado it produced and the foresight of the plant owner in developing and implementing a severe weather plan gave workers extra minutes to take shelter before an F-4 tornado demolished the 250,000 square foot plant. Not a single injury was suffered by any of the more than 140 employees.

Visit the NOAA Weather Radio Web site at <http://www.weather.gov/nwr>.

To learn more about NOAA, visit <http://www.noaa.gov>. 