

STORM-BASED WARNINGS



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

On October 1, 2007, NOAA's National Weather Service began issuing more geographically specific warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, floods and marine hazards. These are potentially deadly, short duration events that can develop very rapidly.

Storm-based warnings provide more specific information about the location of severe weather and the direction it is expected to move. It also reduces the likelihood of needlessly alarming those outside the threat, which builds confidence in the warnings and increases the likelihood that people will take appropriate action.

By pinpointing the specific area of a storm instead of the entire county, NOAA's National Weather Service can reduce the area warned by as much as 70 percent.

The new storm-based warnings have graphical displays that are extremely adaptable for cell phones, PDAs and other Web-based software.

Text and audio storm-based warnings reference landmarks such as highways, shopping centers and parks, and use directional delimiters to indicate county location.

The Emergency Alert System is geared toward counties, so NOAA Weather Radio still alarms if there is a warning

anywhere in the county, but the message provides more specific information about where in the county and the direction the storm is moving.

Storm-Based Warnings Will Potentially Save More Lives

- Focuses spotter and first responder resources on the true area threatened by a given storm
- Easily handles storms moving along county borders
- Allows emergency managers to determine what tornado warning sirens to sound
- Limits the area covered by warning only the area (in time and space) under threat
- Minimizes the impact on residents outside the threat area

Ushering in a New Era

Storm-based warning data are provided in industry-standard GIS formats, making customization easy for PDAs, cell phones, the Internet and television. This opens the door for the private sector to develop specialized services to help ensure the public receives potentially life-saving information.

On the Web

<http://www.weather.gov/sbwarnings> ☺



Under a county-based warning system (above), eight counties are under warning, with nearly one million people warned.



A storm-based warning system (above) is more specific. Here, 70 percent less of an area is covered, and about 600,000 fewer people are needlessly warned.