

# Standard Operating Guideline 14

## Severe Weather

Revised February 24, 2000

### Purpose

The purpose of this standard operating guideline is to provide a consistent procedure that can provide for the spotting of potential severe weather and timely warning of the residents of Stone County.

### Definitions

**Funnel Cloud:** A rotating, funnel shaped cloud extending downward from a thunderstorm base.

**Officer In Charge (OIC):** A person within a particular jurisdiction that is assigned to manage that jurisdiction's operations during a potential severe weather event.

**Severe Thunderstorm:** A storm that produces hail  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter or larger and/or winds gusts of 58 mph or more.

**Tornado:** A violently rotating column of air attached to a thunderstorm and in contact with the ground.

**Warning:** The severe weather event is imminent or occurring in the warned area. Warnings are issued for tornados, thunderstorms, flash floods and river flooding.

**Watch:** Conditions are favorable for a severe weather event in or near the watch area. Watches are issued for tornados, thunderstorms, flash floods and river flooding.

**Weather Spotter:** A person who has received sufficient training in the recognition of severe weather patterns and tornados who is recognized by Stone County Emergency Management as a weather spotter. The spotter is generally a member of a fire district, law enforcement or a ham radio operator.

### General

The following procedure should be followed in the event of potential severe or threatening weather within Stone County or surrounding areas:

#### Activation of Spotters:

Spotters should be activated by the 9-1-1 when:

1. Requested by the National Weather Service.
2. When the National Weather Service has issued a severe thunderstorm warning in Stone County or a surrounding area that could affect Stone County.
3. Each jurisdiction involved will appoint an OIC (officer in charge) of that particular weather event. The OIC will be the Fire Chief, Fire Captain or a person designated by the Fire Chief.

4. The Ham Radio Network will also be contacted to confirm that they are active and confirm that their contact is monitoring Fire Mutual Aid
5. Spotter radio activity will then be coordinated with the ham radio contact on Fire Mutual Aid to keep fire frequency open for other emergencies.

**Location of Spotters:**

Spotters will be dispatched to pre-assigned locations identified by the individual fire districts as designated below:

Billings

City of Crane

Central Crossing

Clever (to be decided by the individual jurisdictions)

Highlandville/Abesville

Hurley

Northern Stone

Southern Stone

In addition to spotting locations, personnel should also be sent to siren locations to stand by in the event that the sirens need to be activated. If personnel are available, all the pre-assigned spotting locations and siren locations should be staffed. Depending on the availability of personnel, the OIC may locate spotters in key areas and siren locations depending on the location of the severe weather.

**Siren Locations** (to be identified by the next meeting – 3/28/2000)

Billings:

City of Crane:

Central Crossing:

Clever:

Highlandville/Abesville:

Hurley:

Northern Stone:

Southern Stone: (7) Indian Point, Reeds Spring, Kimberling City, Blue Eye, Lampe, Cape Fair, Y Highway, Branson West

### **Activation of Storm Warning Sirens**

When a tornado or threatening weather has been spotted, communications will be relayed through the Ham radio operator to the National Weather Service, Stone County 9-1-1, the Emergency Management Director and the OIC. The Emergency Management Director will then advise the OIC in the areas involved to activate the storm warning sirens. The OIC's or their designee, at their discretion, can activate the sirens if severe weather is imminent, and contact the Emergency Management Director at the first opportunity.

If radio notification cannot be made by the ham radio relay, telephone contact will be made by 9-1-1 dispatch or Emergency Services Director or the Officer in charge to the National Weather Service.

The following organizations should also be called and advised that a tornado has been spotted: (Who will contact these organizations?)

1. All school districts.
2. Silver Dollar City
3. Show Boat Branson Belle
4. Stone County Sheriff's Department
5. Nursing Homes
6. Churches or known large gatherings of people.

### **Damage Verification**

In the event that a tornado has touched down, the closest spotter will notify the OIC of the approximate location and give a brief description of the damage. The OIC will then dispatch the proper resources to stabilize the incident.

### **Communications**

All communications by individual fire districts that involve severe weather will be done on **Fire Mutual Aid (154.280)**.

### **Summary**

The following is a summary of the flow of events that should take place during a severe weather event:

1. The National Weather Service issues severe thunderstorm warning.
2. NWS contacts Stone County Emergency Management Director and requests that weather spotters be activated, or, 9-1-1 can activate the storm spotters when a thunderstorm warning has been issued within Stone County or surrounding areas.
3. Officer in Charge (OIC) takes command within each jurisdiction involved.

4. Spotters dispatched to pre-assigned spotting locations and storm warning siren locations.
5. Tornado or potential severe weather system has been spotted.
6. Location of tornado is relayed to NWS, Emergency Management Director and OIC by Ham radio.
7. Emergency Management Director or the OIC advises 9-1-1 to activate pagers, requesting that the storm warning sirens be activated.
8. Target locations within the path of the tornado are called by phone and advised of location of tornado.
9. Individual fire districts confirm damage and need for emergency operations.

## **Chain of Command For Severe Weather Events**

**National Weather Service**

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**Stone County Emergency Management Director**

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**Officers in Charge**

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**Weather Spotters**

Weather Spotters

