

# Severe storms possible tonight as Severe Weather Awareness Week begins

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**ST. LOUIS** - This week marks the beginning of **Severe Weather Awareness Week**, according to the **National Weather Service (NWS)** in **St. Louis**, and it is predicted to begin with a "squall line" of thunderstorms tonight.

**NWS St. Louis Meteorologist Charlie Kelly** said storms predicted for Monday, March 6, 2017, into the early morning hours of Tuesday March 7, 2017, are going to hit the Alton area between 11 p.m.-1 a.m. Main threats with the thunderstorms are predicted to be damaging winds and large hail. Kelly said he "could not rule out" a minimal threat of

"isolated tornadoes" with this system either, but added tonight's storm system is not "as dynamic" of a system as one striking last week, with a tornado killing two in Perryville, Missouri.

Tonight's storm will be a result of a cold front moving into moist and unstable air, Kelly said. When that front hits the area, a "squall line" of severe thunderstorms is expected to form in the late evening and early morning hours.

"Since this is a late evening-early morning event, we want people to have a way to get weather alerts and take them seriously," Kelly said. "We tend to have more fatalities in overnight tornadoes, so we want people to have a way to receive warnings."

Those warnings are dispatched through the NWS's media partners on television and radio, as well as social media accounts managed by those affiliates. Kelly said social media accounts need to be properly vetted for credibility before accepting posts as facts. He said proper news outlets as well as the NWS itself would be appropriate sources for developing weather information.

Severe Weather Awareness Week began this week. Kelly said the NWS tries to have it on the first or second week of March, the month when the peak of tornadoes begins its upward climb. He said March, April and May are the most common months for tornadoes.

Awareness of severe weather is as simple as making a plan, Kelly said. In the event of severe weather, especially with damaging winds and possible tornadoes, Kelly said people should go to the lowest point of their home and make sure as many walls are separating them from outside as possible while taking shelter.

People and families are also encouraged to have a plan for severe weather outbreaks, including an emergency kit. Kelly said that kit should contain items planning for lengthy power outages - including batteries, flashlights, non-perishable food, water and a weather radio.