

IEMA encourages people to stay aware, be prepared for severe storms, flash flooding

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‘Turn Around, Don’t Drown’ are words to live by in flash floods

SPRINGFIELD – With severe weather and flash flooding predicted for large portions of Illinois tonight through this weekend, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency

(IEMA) today encouraged people to stay aware of local forecasts and be prepared to act quickly if weather warnings are issued.

“Heavy rainfall expected through Sunday night could cause flash flooding in several areas of the state,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “When a roadway is covered with floodwaters, it’s impossible to determine how deep the water is and whether a portion of the road has washed away. That’s why it’s so important that people remember to ‘Turn Around, Don’t Drown’ when they encounter a flooded roadway.”

Joseph said 11 people lost their lives on flooded roadways that resulted from several days of heavy rainfall in late 2015. In all, 14 flood-related fatalities were recorded in 2015, the most since records have been kept, according to the National Weather Service.

A threat of large hail, damaging winds and a possibility for a tornado also exists for central and southern Illinois, particularly south of I-70, through the weekend as well.

People should have multiple ways to receive notifications and updated information about severe weather warnings, such as through a weather alert radio, Wireless Emergency Alerts, weather alert apps, TV and radio broadcasts, the Internet, outdoor warning sirens and more.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alert radios can be programmed to issue a tone alarm and provide information about a warning that has been issued for your county. The tone alarm provides a 24/7 alert to approaching hazards, even during overnight hours when many people are sleeping.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are available on most smartphones. Check your phone’s notification settings under ‘Government Alerts’ to ensure ‘Emergency Alerts’ is turned on. With a WEA-enabled phone, you will receive tornado and flash flood warnings issued for your location, even if you’re traveling outside your home county or state. Other smartphone alerting apps also are available, including the tornado app by the American Red Cross.

If a tornado warning is issued for your area, seek shelter immediately, preferably in a basement underneath the stairs or a sturdy piece of furniture. If there is no basement, go to an interior hallway or a small interior room without windows, get under sturdy furniture and use pillows or cushions to protect your head and neck.

For more information about severe weather preparedness, visit www.Ready.Illinois.gov.