

Edwardsville Police and Fire Departments Urge Residents to Be Prepared for Severe Weather

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EDWARDSVILLE – In the wake of damaging weekend storms in the Edwardsville area and throughout Illinois, the Edwardsville Fire and Police Departments are offering tips to help residents prepare for severe weather events. Volatile weather can occur at any time, but spring is often considered the height of the severe weather “season.”

In Illinois, the majority of tornadoes have struck between April 1 and June 30, although there have been occurrences during other months in Edwardsville and the rest of the

state. An essential step that residents should take is to monitor severe weather alerts, and arrange for emergency notifications via cellphone apps, weather radios or other means, said Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford.

This is especially important during storms that hit during overnight hours. Residents are encouraged to sign up for Code RED, which provides customizable alerts in the event of an emergency or critical community event.

It's available through the Madison County Emergency Management Agency at: <https://www.madisoncountyl.gov/>

In addition to monitoring the weather when storms are likely, it's important to understand the terms to describe severe weather events. A "watch" means severe weather is possible, while a "warning" means a storm, tornado or other type of severe weather has been sighted or indicated by radar. Downed trees and power lines are also a concern during severe weather; Whiteford said residents should never go near or touch a downed line.

If it's not a life-threatening situation, downed trees or power lines can be reported to the Edwardsville Police Department's non-emergency line: 618-656-2131. Power outages should be reported to your electrical utility provider.

If you are an Ameren customer, you can see an outage map and report outages online here: <https://www.ameren.com/illinois/outage-center/main> If you are a Southwestern Electrical Cooperative customer, you can report outages by calling 800-637-8667. An online outage map can be found here: <https://outagemap.sweci.com/omswebmap/OMSWebMap.htm?clientKey=undefined>

Edwardsville Police Chief Michael Fillback cautioned drivers to be careful during severe weather, especially when there is debris on the road and outages. If you encounter a traffic light that is out of service, treat it like a four-way stop. Residents who plan to use generators during outages also need to be cautious, Whiteford said. Never locate a portable generator inside a home or garage or close to windows, doors or vents. It should be located in a wellventilated area.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the most common dangers involving generators are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electrical shock or electrocution, and fire hazards. Find more tips for weather and emergency preparedness here: <https://ready.illinois.gov/>