

(Neb.)-Chadron Dispatch Seeks To Protect Residents From Weather

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 07/15/2013 08:09 AM

(Chadron)-Although the severe weather season has settled down somewhat in the KCSR/KBPY listening area, there is still a chance that Chadron might see something before the summer is over. The Chadron Police Department wants to remind residents of what to look and listen for during times of severe weather. Chadron's 911 Dispatch Supervisor Tony Serbousek said there are three different sirens the city uses for emergencies, and residents need to be aware of which one to listen for during severe weather.

Serbousek said the fire and rescue calls are generally short in duration, approximately 30 seconds, but a siren indicating a weather emergency will last for several minutes, and is a steady wail. He said if people remember anything about the sirens, to remember that if it is sounding for more than a minute, that would be the time to turn on the radio and possibly seek shelter.

Serbousek said the dispatchers don't mind visiting with the public to help inform them, but it is possible they are handling several different calls, or relaying information to officers, which makes it very hectic, especially if they are the only one on duty at the time. He encourages people to listen to local radio, and to have a plan.

Serbousek said that waiting until the tornado siren sounds is too late to formulate a plan. He hopes people will come up with a plan, especially if they do not have a basement to come up with an alternate route for safety during severe weather.

The Department keeps in close contact with the National Weather Service in Cheyenne during severe weather, which helps them determine when to activate the sirens. Serbousek said they want people to be informed when weather is approaching, but also don't want to overuse the sirens.

When alerts occur, Serbousek said at the Police Department, they have to determine whether it will threaten the city. When there was a tornado south of Chadron that caused damage several weeks ago, the storm was tracking away from Chadron, so the siren was not sounded. Another storm north of Crawford was also tracking away from both communities, so the sirens were not sounded then. The one time the siren was sounded, the National Weather Service in Cheyenne indicated there was rotation in a storm south and west of Chadron that was tracking to the north and east, which would have put it on a direct line with the city. Serbousek said even though the city was not in the warned area, if the storm would have continued on its track, it would have gone right through Chadron, so he made the decision to sound the tornado warning siren. Fortunately, the storm fell apart prior to reaching town.

The Department recommends that citizens be aware when weather approaches, have a plan, and listen to local radio.

(Questions? Comments? Email news@chadrad.com)

(Copyright 2013 KCSR/Chadrad Communications, Inc. May not be reproduced in any form without permission.)