



## TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

### Operating Policy and Procedure

#### **OP 76.12: Severe Weather Warning and Alert Systems**

**DATE:** March 14, 2008

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to publicize the function and use of Texas Tech's warning and alert system.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in February of every fourth year by the chief of police with recommended revisions submitted to the associate vice president/comptroller and then to the senior vice president for administration and finance by March 15. This OP will be reviewed again in 2012.

#### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

1. Severe weather in the form of thunderstorms, damaging hail, high winds, and tornadoes are a threat to the Texas Tech community. Texas Tech maintains several warning and alert systems for use in the event major storms or other disasters threaten our community. Ideally, sufficient warning time will allow precautionary measures to be implemented. The unpredictability of weather conditions, however, does not always provide for adequate warning.

#### **2. Weather Hazard Announcements - National Weather Service**

There are four severe weather hazard announcements that are issued by the National Weather Service. These announcements and their definitions are:

a. Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Potentially severe thunderstorms are expected. A severe thunderstorm contains either damaging winds (surface gusts greater than 75 mph) or hail stones at least 3/4 inch in diameter, or both.

b. Severe Thunderstorm Warning

A severe thunderstorm has actually been sighted or is indicated by radar.

c. Tornado Watch

One or more tornadoes are expected to be generated by the severe thunderstorms.

d. Tornado Warning

A tornado has been sighted in the area or is indicated by radar.

### 3. NOAA Weather Radio

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information from the National Weather Service. Taped weather messages are repeated every two or three minutes and are revised on an hourly basis. When circumstances warrant, specially designed warning receivers (weather alert radios) can be activated. The weather alert radios sound an alarm indicating that an emergency exists, alerting the listener to turn the receiver up to an audible volume. Personnel in departments where the weather alert radios are located are expected to convey the message received to all other people in the area or building.

### 4. Texas Tech University Warning Systems

- a. Various sirens located throughout the Texas Tech University campus are activated whenever the campus is in imminent danger. Persons should immediately seek shelter upon hearing the siren.
  - b. Texas Tech police car sirens and loudspeakers will be used to broadcast alerts and instructions.
  - c. In the residence halls, alarm klaxons (with a sound distinctively different from that used for fire evacuation procedures) and public address systems (where available) will be used to signal persons to take cover immediately.
  - d. When a situation presents imminent danger to the Texas Tech campus, a message will be sent through Texas Tech's Emergency Alert Notification System.
5. Tests of the various warning and alert systems will be conducted by March 15 of each year. The tests will be well publicized in *The Daily Toreador* in advance of the tests.
  6. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety will distribute informational literature on tornado procedures in all university buildings by March 1.
  7. If a tornado warning is issued or a tornado is sighted, the following actions should be taken:
    - a. Seek inside shelter, preferably a basement, or inside a steel-framed or reinforced concrete structure (including all major university buildings).
    - b. Evacuate upper floors of all buildings.
    - c. Seek shelter in an interior hallway and stay away from exterior glass.
    - d. Lie flat on the floor and use tables, mattresses, or blankets for cover.
    - e. If caught in open country, lie face down in the deepest depression available such as a ditch, culvert, or ravine.
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