

MAHASKA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Outdoor Warning System Activation Policy

I. Purpose

The Mahaska County EMA outdoor public warning system is the emergency alerting system (Sirens) positioned in the following cities: Oskaloosa, Beacon, Rose Hill, Eddyville, New Sharon, Fremont, University Park, and Barnes City. The primary purpose for this system is to alert the public to severe weather either incoming and/or affecting their specific area. Information for the activation of the system can come from several sources, not limited to the National Weather Service, County, State, or Federal Agencies, and local Public Officials. It should be noted that this system is an **Outdoor warning system** and is not intended to be utilized for the indoor warning. Citizens of Mahaska County are encouraged to register for MahaskaAlert. For more information on that system, please visit www.mahaskaready.com

II. Concept of Operations

The outdoor alert system will be activated through Mahaska County 911 Communications when the following conditions are present:

Tornado Warning - A tornado or funnel cloud has been visually confirmed and/or a tornado warning has been issued indicating that the specific area is in the path of an approaching tornado, or whenever any reported tornado sighting within the particular area is confirmed.

Wind Speeds – Winds greater than 70mph, at these speeds whole trees can be blown down or other damage which can cause injury or death.

Hail- Golf ball sized hail (1.75 inches) or larger

EM Director/Fire and/or Police Chief Discretion - Any situation where the aforementioned individuals feel it necessary to activate the system to provide a public warning of imminent danger.

Civil Defense - Any situation defined by the Federal Government as a threat to national security and the safety of the American public. These include: Imminent Attack, Uncontrollable Wild Fires, Public Address for Immediate Safety and/or shelter

III. Public Response and Further Actions

Mahaska County EMA shall make all efforts to inform and educate the public what actions to take when the siren are sounded for an emergency situation. These actions shall include, but not be limited to, tuning into local television and radio stations for further weather information, or taking immediate shelter from the perceived danger. Due to the nature of the situations which require the activation of the outdoor warning system, citizens shall be encouraged not to call 911 unless in the event of an emergency due to the overwhelming number of calls received for emergency services personnel during such situations. The sirens **WILL NOT** be activated for an all-clear notification.

III. System Testing

All sirens will be tested at a minimum of once a month during severe weather season. The schedule for specific areas will be maintained on our webpage www.mahaskaready.com