



PRESS RELEASE – May 11, 2015

Fire Department: 972-625-3944

Outdoor warning sirens explained

THE COLONY, Texas — The City of The Colony always strives to be proactive when it comes to the safety of our residents. This includes the manner in which the city’s Emergency Management Division utilizes our outdoor warning sirens.

In response to concerns from residents regarding the readiness of the city’s outdoor warning sirens, we wish to further outline the steps involved in their use. The City of The Colony has eight siren locations strategically placed to alert people who may be in public *outdoor* areas to take shelter indoors. The eight siren locations are:

- Hidden Cove Park;
- Etheridge Drive and North Colony Boulevard;
- 4180 Main St.;
- 5600 Rolling Hill Road;
- 6901 Saintsbury Drive;
- 5105 North Colony Boulevard;
- Turner Street Park; and,
- 4500 block of North Shore Drive.

Fire Chief Scott Thompson said it is important to note that outdoor warning sirens are not intended to warn people who are indoors. “I realize that this position may not be comforting, but in reality outdoor sirens are not a reliable means of notifying people who are in their homes and they should not be considered as a means of early indoor notification,” he said.

On the morning of May 10, the City of The Colony was placed under a tornado warning by the National Weather Service (NWS) and personnel were standing by ready to activate the outdoor warning sirens, which were fully operational. During this time, local media outlets were instructing people in The Colony to take cover based on various radar signatures and NWS criteria. However, while conditions were favorable and a threat potential present as evidenced by the warning status, there were no actual indicators observed by emergency spotters from the police and fire departments to warrant activation of the sirens.

“We do not hesitate to sound the sirens when needed, but we prefer to observe actual conditions when possible before activation because sounding the outdoor sirens does cause additional challenges,” Thompson said, such as an increase in the volume of calls to 9-1-1 potentially delaying responses to confirmed fire, EMS, or police emergencies.

In 2011, The Colony was certified as [Storm Ready](#) by the National Weather Service. To achieve this designation, all of our alert processes and notifications were tested and verified as effective for their intended purpose. The Colony Emergency Management Division recommends the purchase of a weather radio with battery back-up for the best notification of severe weather. Other options include phone or computer applications for early notification and then, if the power is not interrupted, monitoring television, radio, or websites for updates. These recommendations are in line with the National Weather Service and emergency management best practices.

“While we continuously strive to educate our residents on best practices for severe weather information, we can and will do a better job regarding outdoor warning sirens,” Thompson said.

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