

READY PRINCE WILLIAM - PARTICIPATE IN THE 2019 STATEWIDE VIRGINIA TORNADO DRILL

For Release

March 18, 2019

"Tornadoes can happen anytime, anywhere in Virginia, they don't have a season," states Acting Chief Tim Keen of the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System. "Knowing what to do during a tornado warning can save your life." Therefore, Prince William County Emergency Management and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management encourage the public to participate in the 2019 Statewide Tornado Drill. Scheduled for **Tuesday, March 19th, at 9:45 a.m.**, residents, businesses, and private organizations can prepare for tornadoes and other severe spring weather in the following ways:

- [Register](#) to participate in the drill
- [Build an Emergency Kit](#)
- Create or review your [Emergency Plan](#), and know where your shelter will be
- Stay Informed with a [NOAA weather radio](#) and sign up to [receive alerts](#)

The National Weather Service will send a tornado warning *test* over NOAA weather radios, which will trigger an audible alert and show a message similar to what people would hear or see during an actual tornado warning. Additionally, the Emergency Alert System will broadcast the test through all radio and TV stations (AM/FM radio, digital, analog, cable and satellite).

Prince William County Emergency Management will also send a test tornado alert notification through our alerting system, called PWC Alerts. You can sign up for PWC Alerts by visiting www.pwcgov.org/alerts.

Below are the recommended actions for an actual tornado, as well as for the drill...

Before a tornado advisory is issued, you should know the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning:

- **Tornado Watch:** A tornado is possible in your area. You should monitor weather-alert radios and local radio and TV stations for information.
- **Tornado Warning:** A tornado has been sighted in the area or has been indicated by National Weather Service Doppler radar. When a warning is issued, take cover immediately.

During a tornado (or if a Tornado Warning is issued):

- **If inside**, get to the lowest floor (preferably a basement) or most interior space (closet, bathroom, hallway, or designated shelter in your building).

- Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls; stay in the center of the room.
- Cover your head and neck; protect yourself from flying debris.
- **If outside**, get to the lowest location you can find (avoid bridges and overpasses), and cover your head.
- If inside a vehicle, buckle your seat belt, put your head down below window level, and cover your head.

After a tornado:

- Listen to officials for updates and instructions.
- Account for those around you. Check in with family if in a separate location.
- Stay away from debris and downed power lines.
- Photograph damage to your property in order to assist with insurance.
- Review your emergency plan, restock your kit, and talk with others about what you can do to improve your tornado preparedness.

Practice these steps with family, friends, and co-workers as part of the Tornado Drill. There is no alert to end the drill; once you're in your shelter, you should account for everyone, discuss the actions that you took, what went well, what you could do better next time, and decide who else needs to know in order to improve the process.

To register for the drill, please go to: <http://www.vaemergency.gov/tornadodrill/>.

To sign up for PWC Alerts, please go to: www.pwcgov.org/alerts.

For more information about emergency preparedness, go to www.pwcgov.org/ready.

If severe weather threatens Virginia on March 19th, the drill will be rescheduled for the following day (Wednesday, March 20th, at 9:45 a.m.).