

Siren testing is next Thursday

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Phillips County Communications Center will test its tornado siren and procedures in Holyoke and Paoli Thursday, April 25. The Holyoke test will be done at 10 a.m., followed by the Paoli test at about 10:15 a.m.

During the Holyoke test, the first siren will blow continuously for three minutes. During an actual tornado emergency, this signal means a tornado has been sighted within 10 miles of Holyoke.

The second signal, in which the siren will blow for 30 seconds with a 30-second break and then blow again for 30 seconds, means the tornado has left the area.

CommCenter director Kenny Gaskill said the tornado siren should sound significantly different than the whistle that goes off at 7 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. Residents are reminded to call 911 immediately if they see a tornado.

The tornado siren differs from the volunteer fire department siren used during fires and automobile accidents as well. HVFD sirens are not continuous and have no set time limit. HVFD sirens stop once enough volunteers arrive at the station.

If the weather is stormy on Thursday, Gaskill said the siren test will take place the following day on Friday, April 26 at 10 a.m. If neither day is good, it will be postponed so residents will not confuse the test with a real tornado emergency.

In time of emergency, residents can seek shelter at the Phillips County Event Center or at Holyoke High School. Secondary shelters include First Baptist Church, Phillips County Court House, First United Methodist Church and Zion Lutheran Church. Shelter is also available at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Amherst and at the Paoli elevators.

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