

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Diana L. Klink
757.514.4104
757.359.1845

Tim Kelley
757.514.4103
757.871.3039

STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILL TO TAKE PLACE MARCH 12TH

SUFFOLK, Virginia (March 9, 2013) As the 5th anniversary of the tornado that devastated the Suffolk communities of Burnett's Mill, Hillpoint Farms and Driver approaches, we face the reality check that tornadoes can and do strike anywhere.

On March 12th, businesses and organizations, schools and colleges, and families and individuals are encouraged to practice taking cover from tornadoes during the Statewide Tornado Drill, set for 9:45 a.m. At that time, the National Weather Service will send a test tornado warning that will trigger a tone alert and broadcast message on NOAA Weather Radio. The message will be picked up by TV and radio broadcasters, simulating what listeners will hear during an actual tornado warning.

When the test tornado warning is sounded, people should move as quickly as possible to a safe area in a sturdy building. Safe areas are basements, interior rooms, bathrooms, closets or hallways on the lowest level of a building. In choosing a safe area, stay away from windows. Once in the safe area, crouch down or sit on the floor, facing down, and cover heads with hands.

“The best and fastest way for anyone to get a tornado warning is by NOAA Weather Radio,” said Bill Sammler, NWS warning coordination meteorologist. Captain Jim Judkins, Suffolk’s Emergency Management Coordinator, further advises, “With a weather radio, you get weather data directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. When a tornado warning is issued, the weather radio sounds an alarm or flashes lights and then gives information on where the storm is, which way it’s moving, and telling people in its path to take cover. This radio could be a lifesaver.”

NOAA Weather Radios with SAME alerts are available at electronics and sporting goods stores, discount and department stores, and online. They come in battery-powered models, and many also have AM/FM bands. A NOAA Weather Radio is available for those who are visually or hearing impaired as well, giving them around-the-clock, up-to-the-minute weather information.

For help in conducting a tornado drill and to register for the statewide drill, go to www.ReadyVirginia.gov. Although registration is not required, people participating in the statewide drill are encouraged to sign up to show their support.

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