



# READINESS RULES

“Readiness Saves Lives”

<http://www.osep.uga.edu>

Office of Security & Emergency Preparedness Bulletin

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Featured Article



## Weather Radios Save Lives

On Thursday, March 1, merely days after the state of Georgia—including the University of Georgia—participated in a statewide severe weather drill, tornadoes killed 19 people in Alabama and Georgia. Despite early warning sirens that alerted the town's 20,000 residents before the tornado hit, eight students at Enterprise High School in Enterprise, Alabama were killed while sheltering in the hallways according to their school's emergency plan. This tragic event may make you wonder about the usefulness of emergency planning and sheltering from storms. However, if you followed the news as the tornadoes tore across Alabama and Georgia, you heard hundreds of stories from survivors who took shelter in hallways, interior rooms, and basements who walked away uninjured.

According to the *NOAA Magazine*, the tornadoes that tore across the Southeast on March 1 struck after significant advance warning from the National Weather Service (NWS). Preliminary Tornado Warning lead times—the amount of time between the issuance of a Tornado Warning and the touchdown of a tornado—ranged from 12 minutes to 55 minutes, providing critical time for the emergency message to sound NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, and television and tornado sirens. For Enterprise, the preliminary tornado lead time was 18 minutes.

Although there are no guarantees any structure can withstand a powerful tornado, sheltering provides your best chance of survival. For this reason, early warning is essential to saving lives. Because you may

not be able to hear outdoor warning sirens inside buildings, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios are recommended for all homes, college residence halls, and offices. Weather radios are available, starting around \$20, at mass-market retailers such as Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, etc., and on the Web. More information is available through the Weather Service's NOAA weather radio Web site: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr>.

NOAA radios broadcast National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts, and other non-weather related hazard information 24 hours a day. During an emergency, NWS forecasters interrupt routine broadcasts and send a special tone activating local weather radios. Weather radios equipped with a special alarm tone feature sound an alert to give you immediate information about a life-threatening situation. NOAA's radio network is an all-hazards system. It provides watches and warnings for natural incidents such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, thunderstorms, winter storms, oil spills, 911 telephone outages, AMBER alerts, and terrorist attacks.

The hearing-and-visually impaired can get these warnings by connecting weather radios with alarm tones to strobe lights, pagers, bed-shakers, personal computers, and text printers. A battery-operated weather radio will also advise you of emergency conditions at home, work, traveling, on vacation, or at play.

A NOAA weather radio may be the best money you ever spend. Make sure the radio you buy has seven channels, an audible or visual warning alert feature, and battery backup. An important feature available on many NOAA weather radio models is Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology that lets users pre-select the alerts they want to receive based upon

the area where they live, allowing residents to tailor their weather radio alerts to their specific area.

Based on results from the February 23 severe weather drill, we know only 299 of 790 online survey responders were able to hear the outdoor sirens. Offices, classrooms, and residence halls equipped with NOAA weather radios were most likely to receive the warning and the subsequent “all clear” message. We encourage campus departments and individuals to make this small investment in safety—your life could depend on it!

Adapted from the NOAA Magazine and FEMA Release Number: 1679-009

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## Pandemic Influenza Plan

Because of the emerging threat posed by the H5N1 virus, since 2005, representatives from the UGA Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness (OSEP), University Health Center (UHC), and UGA Police Department (UGA PD) have been involved in pandemic influenza planning in conjunction with local, state, and federal emergency planning and response agencies. The community-wide planning efforts are ongoing. However, the overall ability of the University to respond appropriately to an influenza pandemic will also depend on the readiness of individuals and departments within the University of Georgia to respond appropriately. Therefore, to aid departments in their planning efforts, OSEP has developed a [planning tool](#) to guide departmental discussions and planning efforts to address this serious threat.

The [Pandemic Influenza Plan](#) provides general guidelines on how each named department or unit with campus-wide responsibility will be involved in the overall campus influenza pandemic preparations, response, and recovery efforts. Individual departments should also develop a departmental pandemic influenza response plan. To assist departments in this effort, the Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness has

developed a “[Pandemic Influenza Departmental Level Planning Tool](#).” Access this document at [www.osep.uga.edu](http://www.osep.uga.edu), then select “Pandemic Influenza Planning at UGA.” This document contains templates for guiding departmental response and business continuity planning. Additionally, it is important for UGA faculty, staff, and students to make individual plans for a potential influenza pandemic. The planning tool provides information pertinent to individuals.

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## Kudos

Steve Harris, Emergency Operations Manager in the UGA Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness, recently obtained Georgia Certified Emergency Manager status from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

Steve develops and tests all of UGA’s emergency plans for large-scale events. During emergencies, it is his job to activate and manage the University’s Emergency Operations Center as well as coordinate the setup and activation of emergency shelters. He also monitors campus-wide compliance with the National Incident Management System regulations and provides ongoing emergency preparedness training to faculty, staff, and students.

During planning and real emergencies, Steve will interact with emergency responders and managers locally and from the entire state. The extensive instruction Steve received during this certification process will be invaluable during a crisis.



### Upcoming Issue:

The Role of UGA Building Safety and Security Representatives

Bulletins are available bimonthly. The issues assist in disseminating current security preparedness information from this office and other University units. Sign up to receive issues of *Readiness Rules* by e-mail. Click on “**bulletin by e-mail**” located on the [home / contact us](#) bar on the OSEP Web site <http://www.osep.uga.edu>.