

Governor To Sign Severe Weather Awareness Proclamation

With the beginning of severe weather season drawing nearer, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management is reminding all Kansans to be prepared. To that end, Gov. Jeff Colyer will sign a proclamation Feb. 20 marking the week of March 5-9 as "Severe Weather Awareness Week in Kansas."

The signing will take place in the Governor's Ceremonial Office in the Kansas Statehouse at 10 a.m.

The proclamation highlights the need for awareness of approaching severe weather and the value of emergency preparedness. Although there were 60 documented tornadoes in the state last year, no deaths were attributed to those events and credits early warning, spotter and preparedness systems helping to contribute to fewer lives lost and fewer injuries.

Kansans are also urged to take part in the statewide tornado safety drill Tuesday, March 6 at 10 a.m. (CST). If severe weather is expected on or around the test time on March 6th it will be postponed to the backup date. The backup date for the tornado drill will be Thursday, March 8 at 10 a.m. (CST).

"It doesn't take a lot of time or a lot of money to ensure you and your family are prepared," said Angee Morgan, KDEM deputy director. "If you don't already have an emergency kit, start now by buying a few extra batteries and high-energy snacks during your weekly shopping. Throw a change of clothes, an old pair of glasses and a pair of shoes in your kit.

"Check your first aid kit and make sure it's complete and up-to-date," said Morgan. "Doing a little bit each week makes it easier to prepare for unexpected events, particularly when you get the entire family involved in gathering the supplies and making an emergency plan.

"If you don't have a specially-constructed storm shelter or a basement, do you know where the safest place in your home is? Do you know how to safely shut off the gas or electricity? If you become separated, do you have a meeting area? How will you communicate with family members who may not be at home when a disaster hits or your loved ones who will be wondering about your safety? These are the things you will need to think about when making your plan."

Morgan said more information on emergency preparedness and building an emergency kit can be found online at www.ksready.gov.

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management will be posting preparedness information and hosting challenges on its Facebook page throughout the week at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Kansas-Division-of-Emergency-Management/67758892983>

KDEM also has an online "Kansas Preparedness Challenge." Completing each monthly challenge makes participants eligible for a prize drawing. Go to www.ksready.gov and click on the "Kansas Preparedness Challenge" link to get started.

For more information on emergency preparedness, go to www.ksready.gov, www.redcross.org, or www.fema.gov.