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Media Release

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TORNADO PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornados can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. To begin preparing, you should build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan. Be alert to changing weather conditions and listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television newscasts for the latest information. Look for the following danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Large hail
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
- Loud roar, similar to a freight train

If a tornado "watch" is issued for your area, it means that a tornado is "possible." Listed below are safety tips during a **TORNADO WATCH**:

- Gather items like water, weather radio with extra batteries, snacks, blankets, and flashlights. Keep a radio (i.e. WJOL AM 1340) or local area TV station on so you will have access to the most up-to-date storm information. www.willcountyma.org/noaa.php
- Limit travel during a tornado watch. One of the most dangerous places you can be during a tornado is in your car.
- Keep alert and watch for changing weather conditions. Be ready to seek shelter at a moments notice

Watches give you time to plan and prepare by placing small objects inside (such as garbage cans, bicycles, and patio/deck furniture). **Keep children under close supervision.**

If a **TORNADO WARNING** is issued, it means that a tornado has actually been spotted or is strongly indicated on radar, and it is time to go to a safe shelter **immediately.**

If you're in a mobile home:

- Heed all local watches and warnings and leave your mobile home to seek shelter as quickly as possible before a tornado strikes, preferably in a nearby building with a basement. Do not remain in a mobile home during a tornado. Even mobile homes equipped with tie-down systems cannot withstand the force of a tornado's winds.

If You're in a Building:

- Make sure you have a portable radio, preferably NOAA Weather Radio, for weather alerts and updates.
- Seek shelter in the lowest level of your home, such as a basement or storm cellar. If you don't have a basement, go to an inner hallway, a smaller inner room, or a closet. Keep away from all windows and glass doorways.
- Keep pets on a leash or in a crate or carrier.
- Stay inside until you're certain the storm has passed, as multiple tornadoes can emerge from the same storm. Do not leave a building to attempt to "escape" a tornado.

If You're in a Car:

- If you can safely drive away from the tornado, do so.
- If there is a sturdy structure available, go inside. If no building is available, it might be better to pull over, stop the car (but leave it running so the air bags work), and crouch down below the windows. The airbags and frame of the car will offer some amount of protection, but certainly not absolute safety.
- A long-standing safety rule has been to get out of the car and into a ditch. If you do that, you should get far enough away from the car so that it doesn't tumble onto you. Being below the prevailing ground level may shield you from some of the tornado wind and flying debris, but there is still danger from those. **DO NOT** get out of a vehicle and climb up under the embankment of a bridge or overpass. This often increases your risk.

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City Manager