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City council, in conjunction with the City of Burleson's Emergency Management team, declared the week of Feb. 19-25 as Severe Weather Awareness Week.

Each year brings the potential for violent weather to Texas. Violent weather includes flooding, tornadoes, hail storms, and straight line winds.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service have joined together with all cities and counties to urge citizens to prepare for severe weather events and to educate themselves on safety strategies.

The City of Burleson policy follows the North Central Texas Council of Government weather policy which defines severe weather as a storm with the potential of producing hail at least one-inch in diameter and/or winds in excess of 70 miles per hour. Tornadoes, which can occur year round at any time of day, can produce winds that range from 110 to more than 250 miles per hour.

The City's Emergency Operations Center is the information hub. The EOC team - fire department, police department, public works, and public information officer - staff the EOC when severe weather is imminent. The EOC team works with the National Weather Service and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES). The outdoor warning siren system and the Connect-CTY emergency phone notification messages are sent from the EOC. Other City departments are kept on alert to provide needed services if disaster strikes.

All residents and businesses are alerted to weather emergencies via the Outdoor Warning System. The siren system has both voice and sound (siren, horns). There are two types of weather alerts, tornado alert and severe weather alert. The tornado alert includes a voice message, followed by a three-minute siren, and ends with a repeat of the voice message. The severe weather alert includes a voice message, followed by a 30 second discontinuous horn, and ends with a repeat of the voice message.

The Outdoor Warning System is not designed to be heard indoors. When the outdoor warning system is activated, citizens should go inside, seek shelter in an interior room of their home and tune to a weather radio or TV/radio for more information.

Make sure you are signed up with the City's Blackboard Connect-CTY emergency notification service if you want to receive alerts for tornado warnings, severe thunderstorm warnings, chemical emergencies, a state emergency declared by the governor, a national emergency declared by the president, or other emergencies as directed by the mayor, city management, or director of emergency management.

Blackboard Connect-CTY alerts are pre-recorded telephone messages made to the publicly-listed phone numbers of residents and businesses in the city. Individuals and businesses may also go online and add cell phone numbers so they can receive the pre-recorded voice message via a cell phone. The emergency alerts are sent by e-mail, if requested. This service is free to the public.

City officials also encourage all citizens to buy a weather radio with S.A.M.E. technology (programming to receive local alerts).

For more information and a link to a preparedness guide, go to the City website, www.burlesontx.com, Departments, Fire Department, Divisions, Emergency Management.