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September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). The 2015 NPM theme is "Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today." National Preparedness Month is focused on floods, wildfires, hurricanes and power outages.

The City of Burleson's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the central direction, control, and coordination point for emergency operations. Under the direction of the mayor (the City's emergency management director), the EOC team is led by Fire Chief Gary Wisdom (the City's emergency management coordinator) and is staffed by the fire department, police department, public works, and public information officer, when severe weather is imminent. The EOC team works with the National Weather Service and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) storm spotters. The outdoor warning siren system and the Everbridge Emergency Notifications are sent from the EOC. Other City departments and City officials are kept on alert to provide needed services if disaster does strike.

Everbridge alerts are pre-recorded telephone messages made to publicly-listed phone numbers. With Everbridge, you control how you receive messages. Messages can be sent by cell phone, landline, email, text message, fax, pager, and more, but you must register that information by opting in to the Everbridge emergency notification system. This service is free to the public. If you are not signed up to receive the alerts, you can do so by going to <http://bit.ly/Cityalerts>.

The Outdoor Warning System is not designed to be heard indoors. Those sirens are sounded to warn anyone who is outside – golfers, sports teams, walkers, runners, bicyclists, motorists, and people doing yard work – that severe weather is on the horizon. 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.

There are 11 outdoor warning siren locations (see map, <http://bit.ly/sirenlocations>) in Burleson. The EOC has the district divided in to four districts. If it is a tornado warning, the entire city is alerted. If it is a severe

thunderstorm warning, only the district that is in the path of that severe thunderstorm is alerted.

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.

Burleson has experienced severe flooding as recently as May and June of 2015. When the weather takes a turn for the worse, more City and community resources, and the mayor, are called in to the Emergency Operations Center. According to Section 418.1015 (a) of the Texas Government Code, the mayor is the director of emergency management. The mayor serves as the governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties defined in Chapter 418 of the Government Code; may exercise the powers granted to the governor under Chapter 418 on an appropriate local scale; and, has the authority to declare a local state of disaster. As provided by Section 418.1015 (c), the mayor has designated the fire chief to serve as emergency management coordinator to assist the mayor by developing the emergency management plan for the City and implementing that plan in response to a potential or actual emergency.

The EOC team and City officials encourage everyone to take part, make a plan and know what to do during an emergency. This means having an up-to-date contact list for those you may need to reach during a disaster and establishing alternate methods of communication in case traditional means are not available. With the help of the Department of Homeland Security's Ready.gov website, you can see how to reconnect with family after a disaster; how to plan for specific needs before a disaster; how to build an emergency kit; and how to practice for an emergency. Please visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september) for more information.