NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards

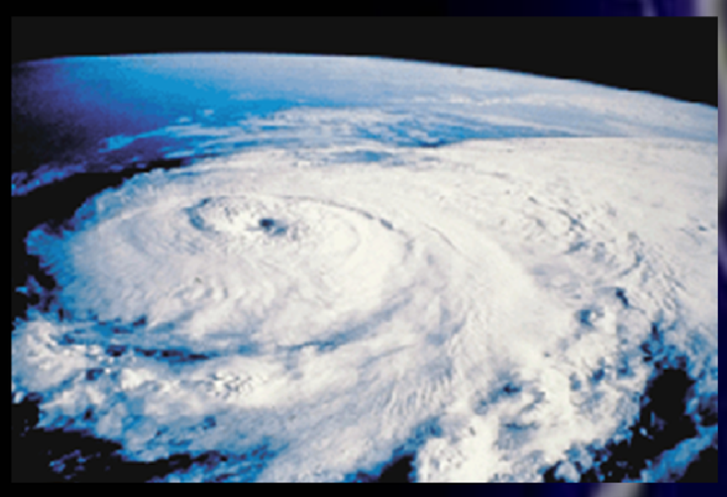
What is NOAA Weather Radio?

NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) broadcasts National Weather Service (NWS) watches, warnings, forecasts, and non-related weather hazards 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Over 900 transmitters cover 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and U.S. Pacific Territories. NOAA Weather Radios operate at seven different frequencies ranging from 162.400-162.550 MHz and have a signal reception that typically extends in a 40 mile radius from the transmitter.

With the help of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), NOAA Weather Radio is an all hazards radio network, making it the most comprehensive weather and emergency information available. While NOAA Weather Radio coverage extends across 85-95 percent of the nation, only 5-10 percent of Americans actually own a weather radio. The NWS encourages every American citizen to own a NWR receiver.

"A theater full of people were protected due to NOAA Weather Radio and your rapid and timely work. Quite frankly, if it wasn't for you folks doing your job right, people alive right now wouldn't be...people who would have been grieving now are together giving hugs and kisses and looking to bright futures."

Jeff M., Van Wert, OH



"I also want to tell you one of my favorite moments was to go down to Crawford and turn on my NOAA Radio to get the weather. I don't know whether my guy is a computer or a person. But the forecast is always accurate and I appreciate that. I also want to thank you for your hard work, on behalf of the American people."

President George W. Bush
February 14, 2002

Why is NOAA Weather Radio important?

NOAA Weather Radio receivers alert you and your family of dangerous weather situations, AMBER alerts, natural and technological hazards, and national emergencies, along with weather forecasts and statements. In an emergency, NWS forecasters interrupt routine broadcasts and send a special alarm tone, which gives you immediate information about a potentially life-threatening situation.

During the May 3, 1999 outbreak in Oklahoma and Kansas, a supervisor at Norland Plastics in Haysville, Kansas saved more than 100 lives by responding to National Weather Service warnings heard on the plant's NOAA Weather Radio. Shortly after making employees move to the basement, a tornado devastated the entire building. Luckily, no one was injured and Norland employees were very thankful for the warnings.

"I think that the weather radios are important because it's the first line of defense. Whether it's in our home, school, or business, it's something that sits there, it's there all the time, and if the weather starts turning sour on us, it's the first place we are going to get information on what's going on."

Dave Carlson
Nemaha County Emergency Manager, Nemaha, KS

Where should I keep my NOAA Weather Radio?

It is a good idea to keep a NWR receiver near a window in your home and office for better reception, and have one available while outdoors (boating, camping, golfing, etc.) or traveling in order to be warned if inclement weather strikes. Keeping a portable NOAA Weather Radio with your sports equipment is also a good idea for changing weather situations.

"One night at 3 am a tornado touched down near us and they issued a tornado warning. The sirens near our house failed to activate, but luckily we had our weather radio that alerted us and we took shelter."

Paige S. , Hoover, AL

"Over 20 minutes of advanced warning allowed us to execute our severe weather safety plan, which in turn saved lives and prevented injuries."

William Tomic , Principal
Charles F. Johnson Elementary School, Endicott, NY

AMBER ALERT

What is Specific Area Message Encoding?

Look for NWR receivers which have the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) feature. This allows you to program your weather radio for the county you live in and any other counties you would like warnings for. Each state and county has its own specific code to program your radio. If you need help programming your NWR or locating counties codes, contact your local NWS office.

What features come with NOAA Weather Radio?

NOAA Weather Radio receivers can come with several features to keep you and your loved ones safe. Features include a tone alarm, SAME technology, selectable alerting of events, battery backup, and an external antenna jack.

Additional weather radio features can be purchased for the deaf and visually-impaired. The weather radio alarm tone can be hooked up to attention getting devices such as strobe lights, pagers, bed shakers, personal computers, and text printers. Some NWR receivers even come with an AM/FM radio.

Where can I purchase a NOAA Weather Radio?

NOAA Weather Radio receivers can be purchased at electronic stores, retail outlets, department and sporting good stores, boating and marine stores, or via the Internet. There are several companies which manufacture NWR. It is recommended you look for the brand which carries the Public Alert logo. The NWS does not endorse a certain brand of manufacturing company over another, but we do recommend every American citizen have a NWR receiver.

How much do NOAA Weather Radios cost?

Prices for NWR receivers range from $20 to over $100 depending on what brand and model you purchase. Higher quality weather radios cost more, but most radios cost no more than a pair of new shoes.

Manufacturers of NOAA Weather Radios

Midland Radio Corporation, First Alert, Oregon Scientific, Reecom Electronics Inc., Radio Shack, WeatherOne, etc.

Protect Your Family, Save Your Life!