



## News Release

February 25, 2014

Contact: Nick Petro, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, (919) 515-8210, ext. 223

### **North Carolina's Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 2-8, 2014 Statewide Tornado Drill for 2014 Will Take Place on Wednesday, March 5, at 9:30 AM EST**

Raleigh, NC – The National Weather Service (NWS) Raleigh is proud to be promoting North Carolina's Severe Weather Awareness Week, which will take place during the week of March 2-8, 2014. During this week, we are asking members of the community to *Be a Force of Nature* and better prepare for severe weather threats in our area. This year, North Carolina's annual Severe Weather Awareness Week corresponds with the National Severe Weather Preparedness Week, which is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

As a committed leader for weather-readiness, each day during the awareness week the NWS Raleigh will be highlighting ways individuals can *Be a Force of Nature* by knowing the risk, taking action and serving as an example. In addition, North Carolina's annual statewide tornado drill for 2014 will take place on Wednesday, March 5, at 9:30 AM EST. The drill will be broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System via the Required Monthly Test (RMT).

North Carolina's Severe Weather Awareness Week is an effort to increase awareness of severe weather and to motivate individuals, families, businesses, and communities to take actions that will prepare them in the event of severe weather. During the past year, North Carolina experienced 10 tornadoes and nearly 500 incidents of severe thunderstorms with damaging winds or large hail. This resulted in 3 fatalities, 10 injuries, and over 11 million dollars in damages across the state.

"We are committed to ensuring the safety of our community and you play an important role. By taking a few steps now you can be better prepared and assist in saving lives," said Nick Petro, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the NWS Raleigh. Every school, business, and work place across the state is strongly encouraged to participate in the statewide tornado drill at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, March 5, 2014. "Given the memory of the deadly tornado outbreak of April 16, 2011, it makes perfect sense to take the opportunity on the morning of March 5 to practice what you would do if a tornado warning is issued for your school, business, or work place," Petro said.

There are three main components of the *Be a Force of Nature* theme:

**Know Your Risk:** The first step to becoming weather-ready is to understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect where you live and work, and how the weather could impact you and your family. Every state in the United States has experienced tornadoes and severe weather, so everyone is exposed to some degree of risk. Check the weather forecast regularly and visit [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://ready.gov/severe-weather) to learn more about how to be better prepared and how you can protect your family during emergencies.

**Pledge and Take Action:** *Be a Force of Nature* by taking the Pledge to Prepare at [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://ready.gov/severe-weather). When you pledge to prepare, you will take the first step to making sure that you and your family are prepared for severe weather. This includes filling out your family communications plan, putting an emergency kit together, keeping important papers and valuables in a safe place, and getting involved. Obtain a NOAA Weather Radio, and check to see if your cell phone is equipped to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts and sign up for localized alerts from emergency management officials. Stay informed by having multiple sources for weather alerts.

**Be an Example:** Once you have taken action share your story with your family and friends. Create a YouTube video, post your story on Facebook, comment on a blog, or send a tweet. Studies show that many people use social media in the event of a disaster to let relatives and friends know they are safe. This is an important trend because people are most likely to take preparedness steps if they observe the preparations taken by others. Social media provides the perfect platform to demonstrate preparedness actions for others.

Additional Information:

- For information on the different types of severe weather such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and flooding, and how you can prepare for them and stay safe, please visit [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://ready.gov/severe-weather) or the Spanish-language web site [www.listo.gov](http://www.listo.gov).
- For more information about the North Carolina statewide tornado drill on March 5, please visit <http://www.weather.gov/rah/2014ncswaw>.