

# **SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES**

8/11

Usually the college community is given severe weather information under a watch condition. This gives the college community more time to react to the situation. However, we can not always predict how these things will go so we must be prepared for circumstances that go directly to an evacuation procedure. Communication is critical for this to happen correctly. There are several methods that we use on campus for communications. They are:

- College Computer Network
- College Radio and Pager System
- College Nextel's
- College Phone System
- College Fire Alarm System
- Person to Person Contact

These communication devices each have their limitations and advantages depending on the circumstances. Not everyone on campus has access to all of these communication devices and not all these devices are meant for use in a weather emergency. The communication most often used is the College Phone System which is initiated to communicate an emergency to the college community. This is accomplished through the use of Phone Trees which are made up ahead of time and distributed among the buildings. Each building should be aware of their respective phone tree and how it works. The Emergency Management Team usually initiates the phone tree sequence starting at the College Information Center. From this point the key areas of the college area contacted. Each area contacted in turn initiates their own phone tree to communicate the emergency to their building. Once notified of the emergency the building occupants must know what to do and where to go.

## **Severe Weather Watch and Warnings**

Each Academic and Residential Dorm building on campus has designated shelter areas in the lower level of their structure. These shelter areas are identified by signs which can be seen below. Each person should be aware of the shelter area within their respective building prior to any emergency so that they know where to go when the emergency is communicated. The signs consist of red and blue signs. The blue signs indicate the way to the shelter area. The Red sign indicate the location of the shelter area. The area of the Red Sign should be the location that you are in when a Warning is issued.

Under a Weather **Tornado Watch** the Emergency Phone Tree will be activated. This indicates that weather conditions are such that severe weather or a tornado could develop and that a warning could be forthcoming. The Warning is an indication that everyone should be paying attention to the current weather conditions and be prepared to take shelter should a Warning be issued.

Once the Weather condition goes to a **Tornado Warning** this means that an actual tornado has been sighted in the Holland area and that everyone should seek shelter immediately. At this time the City Civil Defense Sirens may also start sounding. If the sirens sound before you receive any warning via the college phone tree you should seek shelter at this time. You do not have to wait to be notified.



The National Weather Service issues tornado watches and warnings. It is also the source that issues an all clear after watches and warnings are issued. You can find out if a warning is still active by several methods

1. Radio or Television
2. College Computer System
3. College Radio and Pager System

Once the National Weather Service has issued an all clear for the Holland area you can resume your duties on campus.

It is important to note that during a Warning condition people follow these rules:

- Remain in the shelter area until the Warning has been lifted.
- Do not release students or occupants to go home or leave the building.
- Stay away from windows and open doors especially on the South and West sides of the building.

**Severe Thunderstorm and Wind** advisories are frequently issued for the West Michigan area. If a high wind advisory (sustained winds of 50 mph or more) is issued by the National Weather Service the Phone Tree will be activated. Severe Thunderstorm advisories frequently are issued and unless imminent to the Holland area and their status issued as a warning the phone tree will not be initiated.