


FORT SMITH POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT	Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren Activation		
NUMBER	1108.15	EFFECTIVE DATE	April 15, 2001
SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	Annually beginning January 1	ISSUE DATE	April 15, 2001
REVIEW DATE	March 11, 2026	REVISION DATE	March 11, 2026
APPROVED BY		CALEA STANDARDS	

I. Purpose and Scope

- A. The purpose of this policy is to describe the process to be followed for the activation of the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System by the River Valley Communications Center (RVCC).

II. Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Fort Smith Police Department to take all appropriate steps to ensure that the City's Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System is activated when a tornado is believed in or approaching the City of Fort Smith. The RVCC shall have *primary* responsibility for the activation of the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System for the City of Fort Smith.
- B. In the event the RVCC becomes unable to activate the siren system, or if attempts by the Fort Smith Police Department to activate the system are unsuccessful, the Arkansas State Police Headquarters in Fort Smith shall have *secondary* responsibility for the system's activation.
- C. The Fort Smith Police Department is not responsible for the activation of sirens in surrounding cities. If the City of Fort Smith is not part of a tornado warning, or it does not appear to be in the path of an approaching tornado, the Fort Smith Police Department will not activate the Tornado Warning Siren System.

III. Procedure

- A. RVCC personnel shall activate the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System upon authorization from any supervisor, sworn or non-uniformed. The supervisor may actually be in the Dispatch Center, elsewhere in the Police Department, or in the field. If the supervisor is in the field, all relevant weather warning information received in the RVCC shall be ***immediately and accurately*** relayed to the supervisor by the RVCC personnel utilizing the most efficient and quickest method possible.

Page 1 of 3	Effective Date: April 15, 2001
Subject: Tornado Warning Siren Activation	Number: 1108.15

- B. Authorization to activate the system shall be made by the sworn or non-uniformed supervisor after any of the following conditions are met:
1. Notification by the National Weather Service that a tornado is approaching the City of Fort Smith. This notification may be in the form of a telephone call, ACIC/NCIC terminal, NAWAS warning system, or by weather radio;
 2. Notification received by a police officer in the field of the presence of a tornado;
 3. Information received from a representative of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, a severe storms “weather spotter” or amateur radio operator that a tornado is approaching the City of Fort Smith. This information may be received in person, by radio or by telephone; or
 4. Information received from a television broadcast or weather channel that a tornado is approaching the City of Fort Smith.
- C. In the event that the RVCC is not able to make contact with a supervisor, the Telecommunicator is authorized and required to activate the Tornado Warning Siren System. However, the Telecommunicator shall document the unsuccessful attempts to locate the supervisor by making the appropriate record in the CAD system and must continue exhausting all efforts to locate and notify a supervisor. This can be done by creating an “Unlisted” call for service number and assigning it to a Communication Supervisor’s call sign. From there, the Telecommunicator will document notification attempts in the call notes and clear the call “FO”.
- D. Once the order has been issued for the RVCC personnel to activate the Tornado Warning Siren System, he or she shall immediately do so following the procedures described within this policy.
- E. It shall be the responsibility of the RVCC Supervisor to ensure that all RVCC personnel are thoroughly familiar with this policy and with all of the procedures necessary to correctly activate the Tornado Warning Siren System.
- F. From the Motorola MCC7500 Radio Console (any position) select the Police tab to display the police radio resources. Near the center of the screen are four icons with labels for ***Monthly Test, Tornado, Emergency and Cancel.***
1. The ***Tornado*** siren button, located on the Radio Console Screen, should be activated one time. The Siren Activation System will automatically send the activation signal three times. The sirens will cycle for approximately three (3) minutes, after which they will automatically reset.
 2. Once the sirens have reset, RVCC personnel should then reassess the weather situation, in consultation with a supervisor, using information and resources as previously mentioned in this policy.
 3. If the tornado warning remains in effect, the siren system shall immediately be reactivated by the RVCC personnel, following the procedure outlined in step 1 of this section.
 4. While tornado warnings are usually in effect for short periods of times, they may be occasionally issued for a relatively longer period of time. In those instances where a

Page 2 of 3	Effective Date: April 15, 2001
Subject: Tornado Warning Siren Activation	Number: 1108.15

tornado warning remains in effect for an extended period of time, continuous and successive reactivation of the system every three minutes is not usually necessary. Once the system has been activated two times in succession, subsequent reactivation of the system may be appropriate at intervals of ten minutes until the threat subsides.

- 5. RVCC personnel should make every effort to ensure that the sirens have actually been activated, probably most easily accomplished by checking with a patrol unit in the field.

- G. In the event the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System fails to activate, the RVCC personnel shall contact the Arkansas State Police Headquarters in Fort Smith by the most effective means possible (radio, telephone, or computer) and request that they activate the warning system. As before, the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren System should be activated for one cycle, unless the situation dictates the siren activation be repeated. The Arkansas State Police Headquarters shall be kept fully apprised by the RVCC of the status of the approaching tornado activity.

- H. All phases of the activation procedure are to be documented by the RVCC personnel on the CAD system or other appropriate documentation.

IV. System Testing

- A. A test of the Tornado Siren/Emergency Alert Siren Activation System shall be conducted weekly to ensure that the system is in proper working order. With the addition of the Arkansas State Police to the testing procedure, the tests will be conducted in the following manner. Once a quarter ASP will activate the Tornado siren alert, RVCC will activate the Tornado siren alert and the Emergency siren alert. The RVCC will annually conduct a minimum of two of these scheduled testing cycles from the “backup” emergency operations center at 8400 South Zero. These tests shall be conducted every Wednesday, at 12:00 Noon, weather permitting. During threatening weather the test shall be postponed until 12:00 Noon of the next day with appropriate weather conditions.

- B. Maintenance personnel may conduct *Quiet Tests* as necessary during maintenance procedures. *Quiet Tests* consist of twelve (12) seconds of siren rotation followed by a three (3) second low volume audible alert.

Page 3 of 3	Effective Date: April 15, 2001
Subject: Tornado Warning Siren Activation	Number: 1108.15