

Warning Sirens – Who sets them off and when?

After every major storm, there are questions as to who is responsible for setting off storm sirens and what criteria do they use to activate them. There has recently been a change in policy regarding storm siren activation.

Under the old system, only the County Emergency Management Director, the Chief of Police, or the Fire Chief could authorize the activation. The criteria used was that there would have to be sustained winds of 70 miles an hour for at least two minutes, or an active tornado spotted near the city. This created some controversy in some of the surrounding cities so the Sheriff ordered that a change be made allowing the cities to designate who is authorized to activate the sirens and what criteria will be use.

Recently, the Jordan City Council approved a policy addressing the issue.

Individuals authorized to activate the storm sirens in the city of Jordan include:

1. The highest-ranking sworn Police Department Officer on duty at the time of the incident.
2. The highest-ranking member of the Fire Department on duty at the time of the incident.
3. Authorized trained county and state weather spotters.

The approved criteria to activate them includes:

1. When a tornado warning has been issued and there is an indication that the City of Jordan is in the path of the tornado verified by visual weather spotters or by radar.
2. When a funnel cloud is spotted in proximity to the City of Jordan
3. When winds reach speeds that are causing demonstrable damage to trees or buildings, or other structures.
4. When the City of Jordan is in the projected path of a storm where a tornado, high winds, or damaging hail have caused demonstrable damage in an adjacent city or in the county.
5. When there has been a hazardous materials spill, a biological terrorist attack or where other similar circumstances exist that would create a potential risk to the citizens of the community.