



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

NUMBER: 74-04	DATE: 1974
REVISIONS: 4/16/85; 5/14/02; 9/23/03	
ISSUED BY: City Manager	SIGNED: <i>Wm. F. Campbell</i>

SUBJECT: TORNADO EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

PURPOSE: To establish procedures for ensuring the safety of City employees in tornado emergency situations.

POLICY:

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. Tornado shelter facilities are to be designated for employee use at fixed-site City work locations whenever feasible. The Office of Risk Management will advise City Departments concerning adequate shelter facilities for specific locations. Departments shall inform their respective employees of the locations of such facilities. If shelters are located at City facilities, persons responsible for such facilities shall ensure that the shelters are accessible and available for use at all times when employees are on duty.
- B. City Departments will be responsible for establishing internal communications procedures for promptly notifying their on-duty employees when tornado watches are issued. Such procedures shall be tested at least annually by each department to ensure that they are functional and ready for implementation.

2. TORNADO WATCHES

- A. Upon being notified by the National Weather Service that a tornado watch is in effect for the Grand Rapids vicinity, staff of the Grand Rapids Fire Dispatch Center will take immediate simultaneous actions to notify all City departments of the watch condition. Such notification actions will include:
 - 1) Transmission of an automated batch telephone announcement to key City offices and officials

- 2) Transmission of an “all user” e-mail notification to all computer users connected to the City’s intranet
 - 3) Telephone communication with Coldbrook Pumping Station Control Room operators
- B. Upon receipt of notification that a tornado watch is in effect, key City administrators and supervisors will immediately relay such information to all on-duty employees under their jurisdiction, advising them to be prepared to seek immediate shelter if a tornado warning is issued.
 - C. Upon receipt of notification that a tornado watch is in effect, Coldbrook Water Pumping Station Control Room operators will immediately transmit a message announcing the watch condition over all City radio channels.

3. TORNADO WARNINGS

- A. Upon being notified by the National Weather Service that a tornado warning is in effect, or upon receipt of other credible information indicating that actual tornado conditions exist in the Grand Rapids vicinity, staff of the Grand Rapids Fire Dispatch Center will activate the local tornado siren system. Dispatch Center staff will then make immediate contact with on-duty operators at the Coldbrook Pumping Station Control Room, and will inform them of the tornado warning condition. Coldbrook Pumping Station operators will respond by broadcasting a radio announcement of the tornado warning condition over City radio frequencies.
- B. Upon being informed that a tornado warning is in effect for their location, City employees will immediately respond in accordance with emergency plans and procedures established for their specific facility. Departments with critical emergency responsibilities, including the Fire and Police Departments, may designate specific persons or groups to remain at their work stations during tornado warnings to ensure that critical operations are maintained. Unless otherwise directed, employees are to move to a designated shelter area. Supervisors may, at their discretion, excuse their employees from work to allow them to attend to personal matters, if so requested. If employees are excused from work under such circumstances, time off will be treated either as vacation leave or leave without pay.
- C. City employees are to remain in safe shelter facilities for the duration of a tornado warning condition affecting their location. Official termination of a tornado warning will occur when so announced by the National Weather Service and/or the Grand Rapids Fire Department Dispatch Center.
- D. Supervisors are authorized to allow their employees to voluntarily depart from a shelter during a tornado warning condition when (1) an employee’s work shift has terminated, or (2) when an employee specifically requests to be excused to attend to personal matters. If employees voluntarily leave a shelter during a tornado warning condition, they will assume full responsibility for their personal safety. If employees are excused from a shelter during their regular work shifts, such time off from work will be treated either as vacation leave or leave without pay.