



# Weather Warning Sirens Informational Guide

## Porter County Emergency Management Agency



Porter County has 52 weather warning sirens, which are strategically positioned throughout Porter County. The sirens are primarily utilized to warn citizens of potential tornados in their particular area. The Porter County Emergency Management Agency is responsible for ensuring the sirens are functioning and ready to activate when needed.

Each siren is a complex piece of equipment, which is integrated to an overall computer monitoring system. The sirens are checked by the system and displays their current status on a map. Green indicates the siren is fully operational. Yellow indicates the siren will function,

but a trouble issue exists. Red indicates the siren is not operational. A submenu can be accessed for each siren to show current conditions, such as battery, charger, power, communications and door status.

Sync Status:	ok
Comm Battery:	ok
Main Battery:	ok
Door:	closed
Mains-AC:	ok
Charger-AC:	ok
Activation Status:	Idle
Activation Count:	3
Run Level Status:	Activate OK
AC Enable:	on
Restart Flag:	reboot acknowledged
Tactical:	312
Radio RTU Message:	ok
Radio Server Request:	ok



The sirens can be activated by 3 different methods.

Method 1: Activated manually by the 911 Center.

Method 2: Activated manually by Porter County EMA.

Method 3: Automatically activated by the National Weather Service computer system.

Method 3 is the most common activation method. The National Weather Service (NWS) computer system tracks tornados and potential tornados on radar. The system then creates a polygon of the projected path(s) the tornado may take. This is determined by analyzing thousands of data-points per second. That data is run through the computer's algorithms to determine the path. Once complete, the computer system automatically activates only the sirens in the projected pathway. This is different from some county's systems, which by default, activate all of the sirens at the same time. Only activating the sirens within the projected pathway helps to reduce the number of unsubstantiated siren activations, which can diminish the publics' confidence.

Manual activation generally only occurs when necessary and when a trained emergency responder has visual confirmation of tornadic activity. Obviously, humans cannot analyze the thousands of data-points per second like a computer system can. Therefore, the NWS computers are much more accurate and timely. Although manual activation is an option we retain, 99% of all activations are triggered by the NWS system.