



**NORTHGLENN POLICE DEPARTMENT  
COUNCIL MEMORANDUM 2014-12**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council members

**FROM:** John Pick, City Manager   
James S. May, Chief of Police  219

**DATE:** December 1, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Severe Weather/Emergency Warning System for the City of Northglenn

**INTRODUCTION:**

The majority of the members of City Council requested that the feasibility of a Tornado Siren Warning System be researched for the City of Northglenn.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Due to the cost of Tornado Siren Warning System and the low probability of the City being hit with a Tornado, we do not recommend the City purchase a siren system. Instead there are early alert/warning systems available through various government agencies that we recommend the City encourage our residents to take advantage of. Examples are:

- Emergency Alert System, NOAA radio alert system and private systems such as those provided by various commercial television and radio stations in the area. The Emergency Alert System is activated by the National Weather Service and automatically breaks radio and television programming to broadcast tornado “Watches” and “Warnings” in the timeliest manner currently available to reach the widest population. These alerts are also broadcast simultaneously over NOAA Weather Radios.
- Adams County’s ENS system, FIRSTCALL is for Adams County citizens. FIRSTCALL sends texts through their cell phones to alert them of severe weather and is administered through ADCOM911. Adams County has a web page where citizens can sign up for the alerts on their phones. Citizens can sign up to receive alerts for several different types of emergencies.

**BACKGROUND:**

There has not been a recorded tornado in Northglenn’s history. The closet recorded tornado occurred in Thornton on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1983. The tornado was just south of 104<sup>th</sup> Ave. and destroyed several homes and businesses.

**OPTIONS:**

When most people think of a warning system they think of a “siren”. The advantage of a siren system is immediately reaching people who are outside. A disadvantage of the siren alert system is that it may bring people outside, to possibly see a funnel cloud or find out what is going on. Sirens are also difficult to hear inside due to other noise sources such as television and other distractions. Sirens are also expensive to install and maintain. AVTEC a company that installs and maintains severe weather sirens gave the estimate of \$275,000 dollars to install an adequate system.

The neighboring cities of Thornton, Westminster, Broomfield, Federal Heights and the unincorporated area of Adams County do not have siren systems. In Adams County, the cities of Brighton, Commerce City and Aurora have siren systems.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION:**

We believe the best way to provide advance warning is to direct and encourage the public to:

- Sign up for Adams County's FIRSTALERT system is – <https://alertregistration.com/adamscountyco/>
- Obtain NOAA Weather Radios available through retail outlets
- Sign up for publicly available alerts at [www.emergencyemail.org](http://www.emergencyemail.org) or any local news station's text alert systems. These systems are tied directly to the National Weather Service and to trained meteorologists, who can issue the alerts
- Understand the definitions for Tornado "Watch" and Tornado "Warning"
- Develop plans for home and work for each level of tornado alert using the Adams County Office of Emergency Management Preparedness Guides, available on Adams County's web page [www.co.adams.co.us](http://www.co.adams.co.us) Emergency Management.
- Educate citizens through the city's social media outlets on the importance of emergency preparedness and the resources available to them.

#### **BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS:**

- The cost estimate for the installation of an adequate siren system for the City is \$ 275,000.

#### **STAFF REFERENCE:**

If Council members have any comments or questions they may contact Chief Jim May, 303/450-8967, [jmay@northgelnn.org](mailto:jmay@northgelnn.org) or Commander Ron Osgood 303/450-8968 [rosgood@northglenn.org](mailto:rosgood@northglenn.org)