

**Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and Emergency Preparedness**
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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February 17-23 is Severe Weather Awareness Week in LA

BATON ROUGE (February 15, 2019) – Gov. John Bel Edwards has signed a proclamation marking the week of February 17th to February 23rd as “Severe Weather Awareness Week” in Louisiana. The Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the National Weather Service (NWS) and other partners at the local, state and federal level encourage the public to **Get A Game Plan** to protect themselves, their families and their homes in the event of severe weather.

“Some severe weather events happen with little notice in Louisiana,” said GOHSEP Director James Waskom. “That can cause dangerous conditions to develop quickly and having your personal emergency plans in place can save lives. GOHSEP and our partners use this time to provide critical information to the public on various weather threats in Louisiana and to provide steps you can take to prepare now. Check out GOHSEP’s Facebook and Twitter accounts starting Sunday. We hope you use this information to prepare now, before you face a weather related emergency. Stay weather aware by knowing your forecast and take time to learn the meaning of weather alerts issued by the National Weather Service and other weather experts in the media.”

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“Now is the time to review your severe weather plans as we enter the spring months, when severe weather is the most common,” said Warning Coordination Meteorologist-NWS New Orleans/Baton Rouge Frank Revitte. “Knowing safety rules and having a severe weather safety plan can allow you to act quickly when tornadoes and severe thunderstorms rapidly develop. A WATCH means conditions are favorable for severe weather or flooding and you should be alert to rapidly changing weather conditions. A WARNING means take safety action as severe weather has been detected by radar or reported.”

GET A GAME PLAN:

Families and individuals should have an **emergency plan** that outlines what they will do if they have to shelter in place because of severe weather and what they will do if they have to evacuate during severe weather.

Sheltering in place means going indoors, closing all windows and doors and staying put until the severe weather has passed and the all clear has been given by your local government.

You can get safety information from your local government through the local media, on a battery operated radio or through your parish’s alert system.

Evacuating requires that individuals and families have a plan for where they will go if their homes are unsafe.

Identify several friends, family members or others that you can stay with during an evacuation. Remember: when severe weather hits, your original evacuation place may not be available, so you should have a backup plan.

An important part of every family or person’s severe weather plan is packing an **emergency kit** that includes the items they will need in case they have to shelter in place or evacuate because of severe weather.

This kit should include, among other supplies: **flashlights, extra batteries, a battery-powered radio and lantern, a first aid kit, canned food and a non-electric can opener, special medical items for any members of the family with special needs, high energy foods like peanut butter and jelly, crackers and granola bars, a utility knife, plastic sheeting, protective clothing and rainwear, a change of clothes for each family member and at least three gallons of water per person and pet.**

Gathering supplies in one place will help families locate them in the event of a power outage. If a family must leave its home, the kit can go with them.

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ONLINE RESOURCES:

www.getagameplan.org: Louisiana residents can take simple steps to protect themselves, their families, their pets and their homes. GOHSEP provides detailed tips and information for how to respond in the event of a tornado, flooding, thunderstorm, hurricane or other severe weather.

www.weather.gov: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides detailed, zip code level weather information for the public on its Website.

Users can get information about severe weather warnings and alerts and also view forecasts from National Weather Service staff.

www.ready.gov: the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) outlines what to do in many disaster scenarios on its preparedness site.

ALERT FM: a free App that allows GOHSEP to create and send digital alerts and messages based on geographic or organizational groups. Messages are delivered to the data subcarrier of existing FM transmitters around the US. Overlapping signals of FM stations ensure rapid message transmission even when other communication systems are disrupted.

The GOHSEP Get A Game Plan Podcast: highlights key issues in emergency management. The podcast includes timely interviews with subject matter experts at all levels of government along with practical information to help you become more resilient before the next disaster strikes.

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