FORTUNE FAVORS THE PREPARED · THREAT ASSESSMENT ONE-PAGER

Watch, Warning, Act: Weather Alerts

A watch buys you the time a warning won't. Use it.

1. Watch or warning: now what?
2. How will the alert reach us?
3. Which radio, and how to set it?
4. What do we do for each hazard?
5. Is it all set up and tested?

1 The alert ladder · steps in time, not a severity dial. Each one asks something different of you

DAYS OUT — Outlook
Could develop in the next few days.
YOU: Watch the forecast. Charge, fuel up, refill meds.

BE CAREFUL — Advisory
Expected, below warning level. Still hurts the careless.
YOU: Adjust plans. Slow down, dress for it, check on neighbors.

GET READY — Watch
Conditions are right; where and when still uncertain.
YOU: Review the plan, pick your shelter, finish errands, alerts loud.

ACT NOW — Warning
Happening or about to, in your area.
YOU: Act on the plan right away. Shelter or move. Don't wait to see it.

RARE, DEADLY — Emergency
Confirmed, catastrophic danger. Tornado or Flash Flood Emergency.
YOU: Act this minute. Be in shelter or on high ground.

2 How the alert reaches you · never rely on one channel

Weather radio	From the NWS. With SAME set, it stays quiet until *your* county is hit, then wakes you.
Phone (WEA)	Free, automatic, worst only: tornado, flash flood, hurricane, surge, snow squall, destructive storms.
County alerts	Opt-in texts from your county. Sign up for home *and* work.
NWS / app	Full text, map, end time. Know where your app gets alerts.
AM/FM, SKYWARN	Backup when phones fail. Streaming skips local alerts.

Winter gap: phones get **no** WEA for winter storms, blizzards, ice or extreme cold. Use the radio and the app.

3 Program your weather radio · 15 minutes

1. **Find your transmitter** and frequency (162.400–162.550 MHz) at weather.gov/nwr, Station Listing.
2. **Get your 6-digit SAME codes** at weather.gov/nwr/counties or 1-888-NWR-SAME. 0 + state + county: **051059** = all of Fairfax Co., VA.
3. **Enter home first,** then work, school and counties near you.
4. **Leave all events on** a month, then mute statements only.
5. **Weekly test** most Wednesdays, about 11–noon (often silent). Missed twice? Check antenna, batteries, frequency.

MHz: _____ **Home:** _____

Work: _____ **School/other:** _____

4 Choose a weather radio

- **Home:** desktop, **SAME**, **selectable events**, battery backup, **Public Alert** logo. Put it where you sleep.
- **Go-bag / car:** crank-solar. Most can't filter, so they sound for every nearby alert.
- **One for both:** a few portables decode SAME. Check the model number.
- **Hard of hearing:** alert jack for a strobe or bed-shaker. A ham handheld listens but won't alert.

14 models compared: Weather Radio Comparison.

5 SAME codes worth knowing · W = warning, A = watch

TOR	Tornado Warning	TOA	Tornado Watch	SVR	Svr T-storm Warn.	SVA	Svr T-storm Watch
FFW	Flash Flood Warn.	FFA	Flash Flood Watch	FLW	Flood Warning	EWW	Extreme Wind
WSW	Winter Storm Warn.	WSA	Winter Storm Watch	BZW	Blizzard Warning	SQW	Snow Squall Warn.
HUW	Hurricane Warning	HUA	Hurricane Watch	SSW	Storm Surge Warn.	HWW	High Wind Warn.
CEM	Civil Emergency	EVI	Evacuate Now	SPW	Shelter in Place	RWT	Weekly Test

TOR, SVR, EVI predate the letter rule. **No SAME code** exists for extreme cold, heat or ice storms: watch the forecast. Full list: Weather Event Codes.

6 What we do, hazard by hazard

Hazard	At the WATCH: get ready	At the WARNING: act
Tornado	Pick the shelter: basement or inner room, lowest floor.	Go now, cover your head. Mobile home: get to a sturdy building.
Severe storm	Secure outdoor items, park under cover, charge up.	Indoors, away from windows, until 30 min after the last thunder.
Flash flood	Know your high ground and a route that avoids low roads.	Go high. 12 in. of fast water moves most cars. Turn Around, Don't Drown.
Winter storm	Fuel, food, meds, batteries in. Plan for days without power.	Stay off the roads. Stuck? Stay with the car, tailpipe clear.
Extreme cold	Check backup heat, fuel, CO alarms. Plan for pets, neighbors.	Layers, skin covered. Slurred speech, numb skin: warm up, get help.
Extreme heat	Find a cool place (cooling center, library). Plan check-ins.	Stay cool, drink water. Never leave a child or pet in a car.
Hurricane	Fuel, cash, water, meds. Know your zone; decide go or stay.	Told to leave? Leave. Run from water, hide from wind.

7 Winter kills three ways · roads, cold, carbon monoxide

CO is the one people cause. Generators outside, 20+ ft from doors, windows, vents. Never heat with a grill, camp stove or oven. Heaters 3 ft from anything that burns. CO alarm on each sleeping floor. Headache, dizzy? Fresh air, call 9-1-1.

Car kit: Winter Vehicle Prep and Kit one-pager.

8 WX-CON: how is the day shaped? · FFTP's weather posture

1–2 · Marginal / Slight
Charge phones and radios. Bring in loose items.

3 · Enhanced
Fuel up. Confirm shelter. Brief the family.

4–5 · Moderate / High
Stay near shelter. No travel in the risk area.

Built on NOAA's outlook tiers: how to position *before* any watch. Feeds your PREP-CON level. See WX-CON and today's level in the Daily Threat Report.

9 Set-up checklist · do it now, and again before each season

- ☐ **Radio** programmed, on, where you sleep
- ☐ **WEA** on in every phone's settings
- ☐ **Shelter spot** picked; drilled in the dark
- ☐ Fresh **backup batteries**, date written on
- ☐ County **alert sign-up** done, home and work
- ☐ Everyone knows **watch vs warning**
- ☐ Weekly test heard this month
- ☐ NWS or trusted **app** with alerts on
- ☐ **CO alarms** tested; heat backup ready

Read more
The full Weather Awareness guide and the rest of Threat Assessment.

Pair it with
Our one-pagers *Know Before It Matters* (daily alert routine) and *PREP-CON*.

Keep it with your plan
Ready Ledger keeps your household plan next to your real supplies, offline, so both stay current.

The full guide: *Weather Awareness*
fortunefavorsthepreparedcom/threat-assessment/weather-awareness/
The QR code opens the guide. Alert names and codes checked against the National Weather Service (weather.gov), November 2026.

Remember, Fortune Favors the Prepared
Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby