

Purpose: The StormReady Supporter application requires that schools have one or more websites that they monitor for hazardous weather that could affect the school day and when emergency weather situation. This activity will give students the opportunity to learn about different websites from the National Weather Service, the media, and the private sector to determine which websites are best for decision makers to use. In addition this activity will allow students to engage in the 21st Century Skills of Communication, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking.

Special Note: This activity requires students to have internet access.

Instructions to Teacher:

Note: Before having students do this activity, consider doing it yourself to learn more about the websites that your students would be exploring. This will also allow you to contribute to the discussion beyond facilitation of said discussion.

1. Hand out “Worksheet 2-4: Weather Websites” to students. Have the students follow the instructions on the worksheet to explore different websites. For the second set of websites, the worksheet says that the teacher will provide a list of local news media websites for your area. The number of local news media websites will vary depending on your market size and location, (e.g. Minneapolis/St. Paul has significantly more stations than Mankato). A list of TV stations for Minneapolis/St. Paul, Mankato, and Rochester (which includes the Albert Lea area) is provided below. Reference your local TV station list to find the most appropriate TV station set to provide your students.

On the websites, encourage students to consider the usefulness of the website for not only severe weather, but flooding information, fog, winter weather hazards, temperatures hazards, or any other weather hazard that could impact school days.

For website #3, feel free to suggest to students some weather websites you are aware of, but also encourage them explore any site they see as being useful. There is a short list of sites listed on the worksheet. It is better to have more sites than fewer for decision makers to refer to.

The worksheet concludes with the students deciding which websites would be best for decision makers to use. Consider giving suggestions to students about things decision makers may need from a weather website. Also, have student consider their answers to questions that were asked about the websites (e.g. ease of use, pros v. cons, etc.). It is also important to remind students that these websites will be used, not only in weather emergencies, but to determine if recess/physical education class can be held outdoors, if school events can be held outdoors, etc.

2. After students have answered the final question, have the students discuss the best overall websites for decision makers to use. It is recommended to have at least two or three websites.



After the Activity: After confirmation with school administration (and if necessary, weather watcher/emergency teams), record student selected websites on StormReady Supporter application. Ensure the administration is trained on how to acquire information from the website. If possible, have a weather interested student show the necessary parties how to use the respective website.

Enrichment Activity: As part of your weather unit, consider having students compare different forecasts given by different websites (e.g. NWS, The Weather Channel, local TV station, etc.) and determine which website had the most accurate forecast for the day in terms of temperature, precipitation, and cloud cover.

Additional Information (Lists courtesy of stationindex.com):

List of News Media Stations for Minneapolis/St. Paul:

- WCCO (CBS)
- KARE (NBC)
- KSTP (ABC)
- KMSP (FOX)
- WUCW (The CW)
- WFTC (MyTV)

List of News Media Stations for Mankato (Some Minneapolis/St. Paul stations can be used):

- KEYC (CBS)

List of News Media Stations for Rochester (Albert Lea area):

- KIMT (CBS)
- KAAL (ABC)
- KTTC (NBC)
- KXLT (FOX)

