

Purpose: The StormReady Supporter application requires that facilities have a Weather Safety Campaign for those in the building or the public, as well as a weather safety talk. In addition, portions of this element will allow students to engage in the 21st Century Skill of Communication.

Instructions for Teacher: This element can take multiple directions and can combine multiple elements into one project including elements 5-4 (severe weather drill), 6-4 (tour of NWS), and 5-1 (SkyWarn training, if possible).

The Weather Safety Campaign

The State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety offers a “Severe Weather Awareness Week” in April annually. School involvement in this week would fulfill this application requirement. During this week, there also is a statewide tornado drill that does meet the requirements of element 5-4. Each day discusses a different type of severe weather hazard or knowledge as follows:

Monday: Alerts and Warnings

Tuesday: Severe Weather, Lightning, and Hail

Wednesday: Floods

Thursday: Tornadoes (includes statewide Tornado drill)

Friday: Extreme Heat

The school also must hold a “Weather Safety Talk” as part of this campaign and it can be combined into this week.

The next Severe Weather Awareness Week by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety is from April 11-15, 2016. If the project portion of the application is completed before this time period, you can select five students to do go to the main office or wherever morning announcements are read off and they can do a short reading for the hazard/topic of the day. Here is a sample reading one could do for Monday: Alerts and Warnings.

“This week is Minnesota Severe Weather Safety Awareness week. Every year, thousands of people are affected by severe and hazardous weather including hail, extreme heat, flooding, and tornadoes. It is important that we are aware of severe weather and that we are storm ready in case one of these hazards affects us.

Today’s weather safety topic is ‘Alerts and Warnings’. There are many types of weather alerts. Weather watches mean that hazardous weather is possible in our area. A watch means we need to stay alert to possible hazardous weather. Weather warnings mean the hazardous weather is occurring in our area and we need to stay safe by going inside and taking appropriate shelter. Weather warnings can be issued for severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, extreme temperatures, winter storms, and floods.

By paying attention to weather alerts and warnings, we can stay safe from severe weather.

Thank you.”

National Weather Service
Twin Cities, Minnesota
1733 Lake Drive West
Chanhassen, MN 55317
952-361-6671



Statements similar to the above can be read for each day. Students can do research about the topic for each day for their announcement. For the actual hazards, they can include information on types of weather (e.g. severe weather versus significant severe weather), weather facts (e.g. Minnesota averages 40 tornadoes a year), and safety tidbits (e.g. the best shelter from a tornado is a basement or an interior, windowless room on the lowest floor of a building). This will allow students to talk to their peers about being safe, which can sometimes be more powerful than have adults talk on about safety to the students constantly. Students can also use this as an opportunity to display their weather awareness and safety knowledge. In addition, each classroom in the building can utilize the resources available from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for the week (website below). On that website is a PowerPoint presentation created by the MDPS that includes information for each day. Sections of this PowerPoint can be displayed during the day in class. For each day, also consider showing videos on different types of weather hazards (including the videos for the different activities in this package). This can be a great way to bring the week directly to the students. As the teacher, you will want to contact to principal to ensure that all of this can be done. However, besides the tornado drill, doing these short weather awareness announcements and PowerPoints in class should take no more than 15 minutes out of the school day.

Consider also distributing the Supplemental Information Pamphlets (available in Folder 4) during the relevant days. These are age-appropriate pamphlets about the basic science of different weather phenomena. In addition, there are pamphlets on the National Weather Service and Emergency Supply Kits. These can be great handouts during the Weather Safety Campaign. There are also a variety of online resources that can be utilized in addition to the materials from Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Weather Safety Talk

As part of this week, you can host the required “Weather Safety Talk”. This can be fulfilled by meteorologists from the National Weather Service or local television broadcast meteorologists (maybe more helpful for locations farther from the NWS Office in Chanhassen). Student involvement with this can include the students sending the e-mail or letter to the meteorologist(s) of interest inviting him or her, and creating a thank you card. The talk can be held during school hours as an assembly or done as evening presentation at the school with the public and parents invited.

Year-round Campaign

A great way to continue the campaign year-round is to send out to key staff and weather interested faculty daily or weekly updates on the weather and possible hazards that could affect field trips, outdoor classes, athletic events, or recess. This could be sent out from a facilities manager, science teacher, or any other weather interested faculty member. The updates could include: day forecast, extended outlook, weather alerts and more. Such as the example on the following page:



Good morning!

Here is the morning weather update:

Today (Tuesday): Mostly sunny skies. Light winds. High in the upper 70s. No watches/warnings in effect.

Tomorrow (Wednesday): Increasing clouds throughout day. Chance of rain near dismissal. High around 75. Consider changing end-of-day outdoor plans.

The rest of the week: Chance of a lingering shower Thursday morning during bus routes, but otherwise weather looks good. Temperatures in the mid-60s to low 70s and partly cloudy skies through Friday.

Have a great day!

If a watch or warning is issued during the day, the staff member can send a quick message out as well, such as the one below.

Faculty and Staff:

The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Thunderstorm Watch for our area until 4:00pm. The primary risk from this system is strong, gusty winds and heavy rain. Please keep your classes indoors and windows shut. All recess and classroom activities should be held indoors. If sheltering or any major change of daily activities is necessary, an announcement will follow. Please stay alert to changing weather conditions.

Thank you.

Watch/Warning reminders should be sent out to all faculty, staff, and administration. This is a great way to remind people of watches/warnings, basic safety, and general weather awareness. All of these aspects are important for a StormReady school to remain StormReady and to extend your building's weather safety campaign throughout the school year.

Other year-round elements of your weather safety can include a daily weather report for students on their morning announcements and letters home to parents about possible upcoming weather hazards and safety precautions. These are both great and subtle ways to keep weather safety and awareness in the building, but also by applying the ideals of StormReady year-round.

Additional Aspects of a Weather Safety Campaign

As a reminder, elements 5-1, 5-4, and 6-4 can also be held concurrently with this week. Please refer to each of those elements for more information.

Also, consider involving the school in Winter Hazard Awareness Week, held annually in November. While this does not cover severe weather, winter weather still poses significant hazards in this part of the country and can be a great addition to any weather safety campaign.



Other Preparedness Activities (Element 5-6)

In addition to the suggested aspects above, consider any other activities that your school may do that promote safety and awareness inside and outside the school building. These can be anything you do in addition to the Weather Safety Campaign activities. Feel free to fill in this element is pertinent to your building.

If your school have floor/building safety committees, consider having a student familiar with school emergency procedures sit on the committee. This concept has been used in other school districts and it is great way to continue student involvement in weather preparedness throughout the year.

After the Activity: After the awareness week, write down a short summary of what occurred on the application. Include aspects such as: the safety talk and events. Also, include information about the campaign extended throughout the year, if anything. When submitting the application, feel free to attach any pertinent materials (such as handouts, announcements, etc.) Describe anything beyond the Weather Safety Campaign activities in element 5-6.

Additional Resources:

For more information on severe weather preparedness, Severe Weather Awareness Week, and Winter Hazards Awareness Week in the state of Minnesota go to:

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/>.

