

**Standard Operation Procedures**  
“Section” B”

**RESPONSE PROCEDURES**  
**TO THE RECEIPT OF**  
**SEVERE WEATHER**  
**“WATCHES” AND “WARNINGS”**



**If issued a severe weather “WATCH” or “WARNING” will be received from one or more of the following systems:**

- National Weather Service (NWS) Alert Radio
- Cable and broadcast radio and television
- Internet (NWS, NOAA, WeatherBug, Weather Underground, EmergencyE, SKYWARN, Boston News Channel 4 and 5)
- Law Enforcement Teletype
- Massachusetts Health and Homeland Alert Network (HAAN)

**NWS Alert Radios have been installed in the following locations:**

- Primary Warning Point: Southborough Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center - Dispatch Console
- Secondary Warning Point: Southborough Fire Department Headquarters – Watch Room
- Southborough Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Southborough Town Hall - Town Administrator’s Office
- Finn Elementary School – Main Office
- Neary Elementary School – Main Office/Superintendent’s Office
- Woodward Middle School – Main Office
- Trottier Middle School – Main Office
- Southborough Library
- Southborough Senior Center
- Note: Southborough Department of Public Works has its own monitoring system

**The following Internet Websites have been saved on the following computers:**

- Weather Underground.com
- EmergencyE.com
- Live Science.com
- National Hurricane Center home page
- NCEP Models and analysis page
- Boston News Channel 4
- Boston News Channel 5
- NOAA – National
- NOAA – Taunton, MA
- NWS Service Assessments
- SKYWARN
- Storm Prediction Center home page

- StormReady home page
- Struckbylightning.com
- “WATCH” & “WARNING” Criteria – reference page

**Computers:**

- Southborough Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center – Main Dispatch Computer
- Southborough Fire Department (computers):
  - Emergency Management
  - Watch Room
  - Fire Chief
  - Duty Officer
  - Clerk
  - General Station
- Town Hall (computers):
  - Main Secretary
  - Assistant Town Administrator
- Senior Center – Main Computer
- Public Library – Main Computer
- Department of Public Works
  - Additionally have 24/7/365 monitoring internet site on dedicated computer

**Duties of Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center Dispatcher:**

**Immediately once a notification of a severe weather event is received (by any medium listed above) which may impact the safety of citizens/personnel or affect emergency operations within Southborough or the immediate surrounding areas.**

For an easier format of this section *refer to APPENDIX – G*

***\*Southborough Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center – Primary Warning Point\****

Upon notification from the NWS, through any medium located within the Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center, of an **Imminent Severe Weather** event which may impact the safety of citizens/personnel or affect emergency operations within Southborough or the immediate surrounding areas, the 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatcher will complete the following immediately:

1. Make the required notifications to emergency personnel as prescribed below:
  - A “WATCH” should increase the Dispatcher’s weather awareness
    - **Note: NO ACTION is required by the Dispatcher** for an issued “WATCH”, **unless** specifically requested by a Supervisor or Emergency Management. In most cases Emergency Management will have enough lead time to issue notifications of an issued “WATCH” personally.
  - When a weather “WARNING” is received:
    - The NWS Weather Radio within the 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatch Center will tone for eight seconds followed by the voice broadcast directly from the National Weather Service.

- **Note: ACTION of Dispatcher will be REQUIRED** for the following “**WARNINGS**”:
    - TORNADO (Imminent to Southborough)
    - DOWN BURST (Imminent to Southborough)
    - SEVERE THUNDERSTORM (**ONLY** with confirmed multiple “cloud to ground” lightning and/or hail, as these frequently proceed Tornado)
    - EARTHQUAKE
    - Any other “**WARNING**” specifically requested by Supervisor or Emergency Management
2. Upon receipt of one of the above severe weather “**WARNINGS**”, the Southborough Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center will immediately take the following actions:
- (If absolutely Imminent) - Announce on the Police, Fire and DPW Radio Channels:
    - That an Imminent Weather “**WARNING**” has been issued for the Southborough area.
    - Type of weather hazard
  - Notify one the following (*in listed order*) until direct contact is made with one:
    - Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director
    - Emergency Management Director of Operations
    - Police Chief/Deputy Emergency Management Director
    - Fire Office in Charge
  - Inform the above of the following:
    - Type of weather the “**WARNING**” is issued
    - Current location of weather
    - Any additional information that may affect effective emergency operations
      - For Example: ongoing emergency calls, Large public gatherings in town, etc
3. Upon completion of required notifications, the Emergency 9-1-1 Center Dispatcher will open a new Run/Incident on the dispatch system and make the following entries:
- **Required:**
    - Time the “**WARNING**” was issued
    - Type of weather “**WARNING**” issued
    - Time and Person contacted on notification list
  - **Optional:**  
(Dependent on if Dispatcher has time – Southborough only has one-dispatcher on-duty during a shift):
    - Effective times of the “**WARNING**”
    - Current temperature
    - Relative Humidity
    - Wind Speed and Direction
    - Barometric pressure (if available)
    - Dew Point (if available)
    - “Optional” Related Notes:

- The above may be acquired via the Internet at [www.weather.gov/boston](http://www.weather.gov/boston) and type in Southborough, MA or 01772.
  - Any of information not added will be added by Emergency Management at a later time by looking at historical data.
4. When requested activate: the REVERSE 9-1-1 SYSTEM
    - Per the R 9-1-1 Policy you will be provided with a message in writing on the R 9-1-1 Form.
  5. When and if requested: activate the WARNING HORNS (located at Fire Headquarters) by pressing the activation button on the consol in Central Dispatch.
    - **Caution:** Horns are loud may interfere with communications – if open close dispatch window
    - **Note:** Citizens have been educated that upon hearing WARNING HORNS they are to immediately seek shelter indoors and refer to the Town Cable Access Channel(s) and/or Fire Department website for additional information. They are NOT contact 9-1-1 unless they have a true emergency
  6. Monitor for any changes in conditions and note changes in the log a necessary ad as time allows.
  7. Upon the end of the event document and relevant information not yet entered (if any) and close out
  8. Southborough Emergency Management Agency will complete final report – including missing data that the dispatcher may not have had time to enter.

**Duties of the Person Notified Directly by the Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center Dispatch as listed above:**

For an easier format of this section *refer to APPENDIX – H*

Once notified by the Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center Dispatcher of a severe weather event which may impact the safety of citizens/personnel or affect emergency operations within Southborough or the immediate surrounding areas, the Notified Person will complete the following immediately:

1. Notify all Town Department Heads (or designees) the **“WATCH”** or **“WARNING”** issued
  - If possible, delegate this task to Town Hall personnel
2. Notify the Superintendent of Schools (or designee), Fay School and St. Mark’s School
  - Inform Superintendent (or designee) to:
    - Notify each public school
    - Send out the Weather **“Watch”** or **“Warning”** Message on the Connect Ed System
  - Off ours contact numbers: 508-655-7739 (home) & 774-270-2442 (cell)
3. Personally or instruct Town Cable TV Committee to upload the override **“Scrolling”** message related to the event onto the Town Cable System.
  - Pre-Loaded on all noted computers and cable web system

4. Upload the override “**Non-Scrolling**” messages on to the Town Cable System.
  - Pre-Loaded on all noted computers and cable web system
5. Upload: “**Canned**” messages onto the Town Website – Main Page and (if access) Southborough Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency Websites.
  - Pre-Loaded on all noted computers and cable web system
6. Once confirmed messages are activated and running properly instructs the Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center Dispatcher or personnel at Fire Headquarters to activate the Town “**WARNING HORNS**”
  - Refer to APPENDIX – I for Instruction on Activation “**Warning Horns**”
  - Horns are located at Fire Headquarters (*Future plans are in the works to consolidate the two sirens into one located on the roof of the Town Hall – There will be no changes necessary in the activation process when this location change occurs.*)

❖ **Criteria for activation of the Town “WARNING HORNS”**

- SEVERE THUNDERSTORM “WARNING” – With confirmed Cloud to Ground Lightning, Large Hail, Strong Winds or Microburst to directly effect Southborough or immediate area
    - Not just a general county issued “**WARNING**”
  - TORNADO “WARNING” – To directly effect Southborough or immediate area
    - Not just a general county issued “**WARNING**”
  - FLASH FLOOD “WARNING” – To directly effect Southborough or immediate area
    - Not just a general county issued “**WARNING**”
  - SIGNIFICANT BLIZZARD “WARNING” – To directly effect Southborough or immediate area
    - Not just a general county issued “**WARNING**”
  - HURRICANE “WARNING” – To directly effect Southborough or immediate area
    - Not just a general county issued “**WARNING**”
7. Assign someone to set-up the Rain Gauge set to zero.
  8. Assign someone to set-up and monitor the Weather Station located in the Southborough Emergency Management Communications Trailer (EM-1)
  9. Request Alert or Partial/Full Activation of the Town Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – (Refer to Criteria listed below)
  10. Continue to monitor weather conditions and changes. Amend Emergency Action Plan as deemed necessary until relieved by a more qualified representative from Southborough Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), another Local Emergency Management Agency Manager, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

**NOTES:**

- If a storm is immediately imminent to strike Southborough and time does not allow the upload of messages – activate Town “**WARNING HORNS**” immediately. Then follow up with message uploading
- When in doubt and you feel life safety is at risk – activate the Town “**WARNING**” System.
- If you have questions or need assistance and cannot reach the SEMA Director, Deputy Director or Director of Operations contacts one of the following:
  - Town of Shrewsbury Emergency Management Agency, through Shrewsbury Fire Dispatch or Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency – Headquarters

**Emergency Operations Center Activation Procedures:**

1. The Town of Southborough Emergency Operations Center (EOC) shall be put into to ALERT Status for a “**WATCH**”.
2. The EOC will be put into PARTIAL/FULL ACTIVATION for a WARNING during the following situations and at the discretion of the Emergency Management Director (or designee), in consultation with the Town Administrator, Selectmen – Chairperson, Police Chief and Emergency Management Director of Operations.
  - ❖ **Weather situations in which to ACTIVATE the Southborough EOC:**
    - BLIZZARD “**WARNING**”
    - ICE STORM “**WARNING**”
    - FLOOD OR FLASH FLOOD “**WARNING**”
    - SEVERE THUNDERSTORM “**WARNING**”
    - HURRICANE OR TROPICAL STORM “**WATCH**” & “**WARNING**”
    - TORNADO “**WATCH**” & “**WARNING**”

**NOTES:**

- It is not imperative that all parties listed above be contacted. If one is unavailable consultation will continue with those available.
- The ultimate decision to activate the EOC lies with the Emergency Management Director (or his/her designee)
- The ultimate decision to declare a “Town Level State of Emergency” lies with the Board of Selectmen Chairperson (or his/her designee)

**Required Notifications – Long Duration Events:**

1. It will be the responsibility of the SEMA Director (or designee) or Director of Operations to maintain the following:
2. An effective notification process for severe, long duration and potentially high impact events is crucial to maximizing the protection of life and property in Southborough. Some of these events themselves can last from as little as a day to several weeks and recovery can last from a as little as a month to several years.
3. **“WATCH”** periods in advance of expected conditions can be up to 36 hours prior to arrival. The lead time for a **“WARNING”** can be significantly less with arrival of expected conditions within 24 hours. These relatively long lead times should allow for a well coordinated response from all involved municipal and private personnel as well as the public citizens. The key is to have pre-established plans that can be adapted to specific incidents with Southborough has within the Town of Southborough Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) located in Primary EOC.
4. A complete list of the National Weather Service criteria for the issuance of **“ADVISORIES”**, **“WATCHES”** and **“WARNINGS”** are located in **APPENDIX - A**
  - ❖ **Notification of long duration, low frequency high impact events will be issued for the following expected conditions:**
    - BLIZZARD **“WARNING”**
    - ICE STORM **“WARNING”**
    - EXTREME HEAT AND/OR COLD (WIND CHILL) ADVISORIES AND/OR **“WARNINGS”**
    - FLOOD **“WARNINGS”**
    - RED FLAG **“WARNING”**
    - HURRICANE **“WATCH”** AND/OR WARNING
    - TROPICAL STROM **“WATCH”** AND/OR **“WARNING”**

**NOTE:**

- Other notifications maybe issued at the desecration of the SEMA Director or Director of Operations or as instructed to do so by the National Weather Service

***Action:***

- Notify all Town Department Heads and Schools
  - If possible delegate this to Town Hall personnel
- Personally or have Town Cable TV Committee upload the override **“Scrolling”** message related to the event onto the Town Cable System.
  - Refer to **APPENDIX C.a.1** for “Scrolling” messages
- Upload: override **“Non-Scrolling”** messages on to the Town Cable System.
  - Refer to **APPENDIX C.a.2** for “Non-Scrolling” messages
- Upload: **“Canned”** messages onto the Town Website – Main Page and (if access) Southborough Emergency Management Agency Website.

- Refer to [APPENDIX C.a.2](#) for “Website” messages
- Uploading Directions:
  - Refer to [APPENDIX D.a.1](#) for specific instructions on uploading Scrolling Messages
  - Refer to [APPENDIX D.a.2](#) for specific instructions on uploading Non-Scrolling messages
  - Refer to [APPENDIX D.b](#) for specific instructions on uploading to Town and Emergency Management Websites

### **Personal Safety:**

There are many differences between different types of severe weather events but one common threat between all is the threat of severe injury or death of civilians or emergency personnel. It is important for everyone to know the basic characteristics of all types of severe weather and the hazards they produce to ensure safety however it is additionally vital for field personnel to know the following to further ensure their safety.

**THUNDERSTORMS:** Personnel must be aware that lightning strikes can and have occurred more than 30 miles away from where the actual storm is located – **distant thunderstorms still present serious danger.**

If personnel are operating at a location when a thunderstorm approaches, they should be conscious of their location and surroundings. Do not stand next to trees, antennas or other metal objects/structures that can conduct electricity. Do not use landline telephones. Use of cell or satellite phones and portable radios should be kept to a minimum. Unless it is absolutely necessary, do not remain in high areas such as a roof or ladder. If lightning is actively in the area do not make contact with a charged hose line. If at all possible suspend operations and retreat to the lowest area of safe building until the storm passes. If you feel a tingling sensation or the hair on your arms or body stand up immediately stop what you are doing and crouch into a ball position. These are signs you are actively conducting static electricity and increasingly susceptible to a lightning strike. If you are actively involved in a prolonged or viable rescue operation all personnel should be heightened **“WATCH”** for lighting and a Safety Office dedicated to monitoring the weather should be assigned and staged in a safe location.

**FLASH FLOODS:** Flash Floods do not necessarily only occur near rivers and stream, Flash Flooding can occur in low-lying urban and suburban areas. If personnel are working in a Flash Flood **“WARNING”** area a Safety Officer (SO) must assigned designated solely for overseeing water conditions in the area. This SO shall give advanced **“WARNING”** of rising water levels and has the authority to issue a mandatory evacuation of personnel. Remember, do not travel by car or foot through flooded areas. Water depths as little as 2 inches can sweep a walking person down stream and as little as 6 inches can do the same to a vehicle. If emergency vehicle must travel through flooded areas communicate your location, proceed slowly in the middle of the road and be alert for roadway erosion. Immediately report if you encounter trouble and/or when you safely pass the hazard area.

**TORNADOS:** New England tornados are more dangerous than those common in the Mid-West States simply for the fact that our view of approaching storms is impaired by the topography of the land, where as the Mid-West is flat and tree less New England is hilly and covered with forest. Personnel should attend a National Weather Service training session or study independently on-line to learn some

of the indications that proceed a tornado. The earlier one realizes the “**WARNING**” signs the more likely hood of he/she is to survive. One clue of an intense updraft potentially capable of causing a tornado is then a portion of a cauliflower looking cloud shoots above the anvil looking part of the thunderstorm cloud – or flat top of a cloud (Refer to [APPENDIX – E](#) for Visual). This “overshooting top” is often associated with producing tornados. Thunderstorms with the potential to produce tornados, call “Super Cells” produce heavy rains, large hail, damaging winds and midnight like dark skies. Tornados usually occur to the back end of a storm and it is not uncommon for rain and hail to stop completely before a strike. As a storm approaches “**WATCH**” for signs of rotations at the base of the cloud, this could indicate a developing tornado. If you see rotation you may not see a touch down tornado until it picks up debris and dirt. At night, watch for multiple arching power lines and listen for a load roar – similar to a train as indications of an approaching tornado.

If a tornado is approaching, immediately get indoors. Proceed to the basement in a corner away from the bulked and windows. If there is no basement present proceed to the smallest inner most room on the lowest level. If you are caught outdoors, crouch under the smallest crevasse of a bridge or lie flat in the ditch, culvert or depression. In all cases cover your face and body to protect you from flying debris. Remain sheltered until the complete storm passes. NOTE: The pressure associated within the vortex of a tornado is very low and may cause respiratory distress. Remain calm and concentrate on slow, rhythmic breathing.

### **Notification of Damage, Injury or Death related to Severe Weather:**

- Department Policy:
  - Refer to [APPENDIX - F](#)

### **When to Notify the National Weather Service:**

It shall be the responsibility of the Southborough Emergency Management Agency (or designee) to contact the National Weather Service off in Taunton, Massachusetts at (508-823-2228) to report the following weather events:

- Tornado or funnel cloud activity
- Wall clouds, especially if they are rotating
- Any Hail – accurately describe size and amount
- Winds of 40 mph or greater
- Damaging winds causing multiple downed large limbs, trees or power lines
- Damage to structures as a result of weather
- Rainfall of 2 inches of greater per event
- Rainfall rates of one inch per hour or greater
- Any and all flooding
- First two inches of snow per storm and every additional two inches there after
- Snowfall rates of one or more inches per hour
- Snowfall totals per event
- Radial Ice accretion of 1/3 inches or greater
- Any and all precipitation type changes (rain to snow etc)
- Any and all thunder and lightning during a snow storm
- Any and all snow squalls

**Mass Care Shelters:**

The Town of Southborough has several American Red Cross (ARC) Certified Mass-Care Shelters systematically located throughout town. Southborough additionally has currently one small pet designated shelter with town and Emergency Plans to shelter large animals if necessary. The town also has identified a majority of our senior and special populations and developed a plan to rapidly locate and evacuate these persons.

1. Authorization to activate the opening of a shelter will be the responsibility of the SEMA Director or his/her designee. Prior to opening a shelter SEMA will consult with the owner of the shelter location, the ARC and coordinate staffing and supplies to operate the shelter.
2. Shelters listed below will be opened based on the decision of the SEMA Director or his/her designee: (Refer to Southborough Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for detailed shelter information)
  - Woodward Middle School
    - Designated Senior and Special Population Shelter
  - Finn Elementary School
  - Neary Elementary School
  - Trottier Middle School
  - Fay Private Elementary/Middle School
  - St. Mark's Private High School
  - St. Anne's Church
  - St. Mathews Church
    - Re-designated as Small Pet Shelter if needed
3. Should a shelter be activated SEMA will immediately request the ARC to assist with the staffing and operation of the shelter, however the ARC is limited in resources and takes time to mobilize SEMA must be aware that ARC assistance may not be available immediately if at all. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of SEMA to operate the shelter with Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members, Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) members, non-emergency town employees and town volunteers. Regional CERT and MRCs maybe requested if available.

**NOTE:**

- The policy in Massachusetts for emergency sheltering is for persons to shelter-in-place during fact moving emergencies, such as aerial hazard chemical spills, and evacuation to mass-care shelters for long duration emergencies (hours, day, weeks)