

National Weather Service Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2013

*******TORNADO WARNING EAS CODE APPROVED FOR USE IN ILLINOIS DURING ANNUAL STATEWIDE TORNADO EXERCISE *******

Lincoln, IL – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has granted a one-time waiver of their Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules for the use a “live” Tornado Warning (EAS code TOR) during the annual statewide tornado exercise in Illinois on Tuesday **March 5, 2013 at 10:00 am CST.**

The National Weather Service (NWS) offices that serve the state of Illinois will create the “test” Tornado Warning for this important annual exercise. The message will be disseminated with the “TOR” EAS code through the NOAA Weather Radio network across Illinois for input into the EAS equipment at broadcast outlets throughout the state. The waiver issued by the FCC means that all EAS participants in Illinois can broadcast the “live” Tornado Warning for the March 5th exercise without restriction or reprisal by the FCC. If actual severe weather is imminent or occurring at the time of the test, the exercise will be postponed until the next day, Wednesday March 6, 2013 at 10:00 am CST.

“It is of utmost importance to use the ‘live’ Tornado Warning EAS code through NOAA Weather Radio – and ultimately EAS participants statewide – for this annual exercise” said Chris Miller, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the NWS in Lincoln, Illinois. “This annual exercise is conducted by schools, businesses, law enforcement agencies, emergency managers, and the public to prepare for the severe thunderstorm and tornado season in Illinois. A main component of this exercise is the ability to test weather alert radios, law enforcement communications networks, and the EAS equipment of Illinois broadcasters with a ‘live’ Tornado Warning code” said Miller.

The ‘live’ Tornado Warning for this exercise will contain very precise language in several places throughout the message, as well as the audio portion of the broadcast, which clearly indicates it is a test, to avoid confusion amongst broadcasters or the general public, Miller said. This test, which takes place on the first Tuesday of March at 10:00 am CST every year in Illinois, is done in conjunction with Severe Weather Preparedness Week and the monthly outdoor warning siren test which is done in many communities.

For more information contact a NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist in the following locations:

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Central & Eastern IL (Peoria, Springfield, Champaign)	Chris Miller, 217-732-4029
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