



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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**Wisconsin's Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week
April 13-17**

MADISON, Wis. – Gov. Tony Evers has declared April 13-17 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin, and ReadyWisconsin is encouraging everyone to take time this spring to talk about weather safety with their families. ReadyWisconsin, the National Weather Service and Wisconsin Broadcasters Association also encourage everyone in the state to participate in a Virtual Tornado Drill at 1:45 p.m. on April 16.

“It is essential that people take the time during this important week to ensure everyone living in their home knows what to do when a tornado warning or severe storm is in their area,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “During Thursday’s Virtual Tornado Drill, we encourage them to spend a few minutes going over their plans and identifying where to seek shelter.”

Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes annually. During the 2019 season, the NWS confirmed 28 tornadoes touched down in the state of Wisconsin. Of those, 18 occurred during a three-day period in late July, downing countless trees and damaging homes and other buildings across the central portion of the state.

The state has already experienced its first tornado this year, when a storm in late March produced an EF-1 tornado that touched down in Grant County. The tornado did not cause any injuries, but it did damage a home and barn. It’s a reminder that, while spring and summer are the most active times for tornadoes in Wisconsin, they can happen at any time of year.

While most of Wisconsin has become familiar with the annual statewide tornado drill, the ongoing response to COVID-19 in the state means a break from tradition this year. Due to technical limitations, there will be no live test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) that triggers NOAA weather radios and messages on broadcast stations. Communities should rest assured that these systems are still regularly tested. This departure simply means there will be no coordinated statewide test this year.

While some communities may still choose to test their outdoor warning sirens on April 16, it is expected many will not be doing so. In place of those alerts, you can expect to see messages from ReadyWisconsin and its partners across social media, encouraging everyone to take the time to go over their plans and practice them during this virtual drill.

You can find tips on creating a plan with your family at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>
You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (<https://facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin>) for updates throughout the week and tips on emergency preparedness throughout the year!

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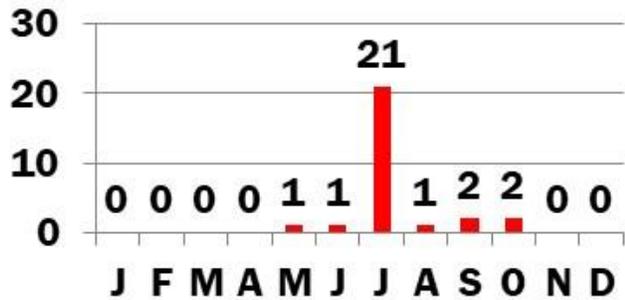


Wisconsin Tornadoes 2019

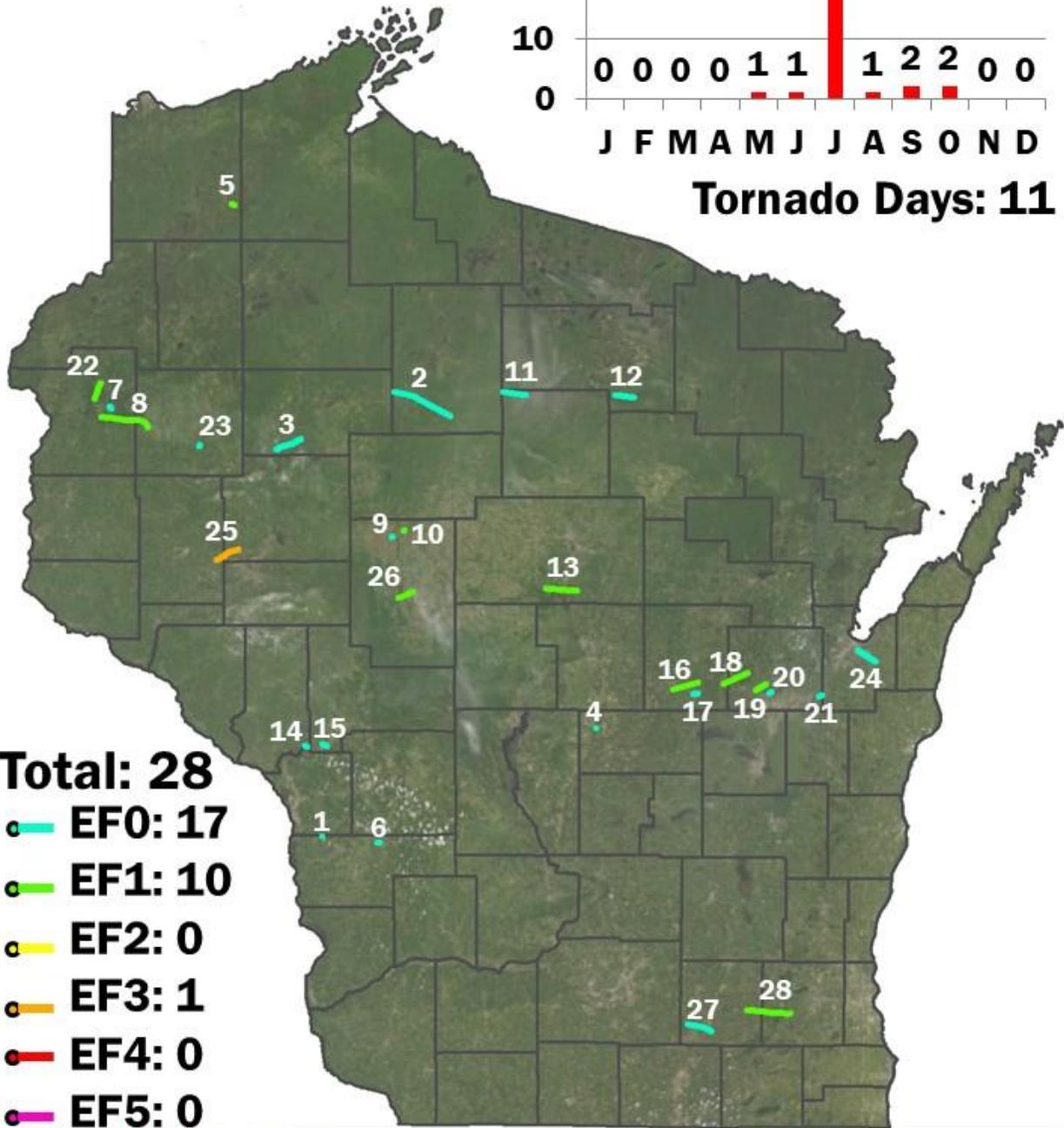
#	Date	County	Location	Mag	Length	Width	Death/Inj
1	5/24	Vernon	Coon Valley	EF0	0.15mi	20yd	0/0
2	6/14	Price	Ogema	EF0	17.4mi	50yd	0/0
3	7/4	Rusk	Weyerhaeuser	EF0	7.7mi	100yd	0/0
4	7/16	Waushara	Plainfield	EF0	0.08mi	10yd	0/0
5	7/18	Douglas	Gordon	EF1	1.3mi	80yd	0/0
6	7/18	Vernon	Westby	EF0	0.5mi	85yd	0/0
7	7/19	Polk	Range	EF0	0.9mi	80yd	0/0
8	7/19	Polk/Barron	Almena	EF1	13.9mi	600yd	0/0
9	7/19	Clark	Thorp	EF0	0.23mi	30yd	0/0
10	7/19	Clark	Owen	EF1	0.28mi	40yd	0/0
11	7/19	Lincoln	Tripoli	EF0	6.54mi	50yd	0/0
12	7/19	Oneida	Rhinelanders	EF0	5.43mi	50yd	0/0
13	7/19	Marathon	Mosinee	EF1	9.0mi	100yd	0/0
14	7/20	Trempealeau	North Bend	EF0	0.8mi	50yd	0/0
15	7/20	Jackson	North Bend	EF0	1.6mi	50yd	0/0
16	7/20	Waupaca	Waupaca	EF1	7.57mi	80yd	0/0
17	7/20	Waupaca	Weyauwega	EF0	1.15mi	50yd	0/0
18	7/20	Waupaca/Outag	New London	EF1	7.55mi	90yd	0/0
19	7/20	Outagamie	Hortonville	EF1	3.5mi	75yd	0/0
20	7/20	Outagamie	Greenville	EF0	0.72mi	50yd	0/0
21	7/20	Outagamie	Kaukauna	EF0	1.1mi	50yd	0/0
22	7/28	Polk	Luck	EF1	4.8mi	100yd	0/0
23	7/28	Barron	Hillsdale	EF0	0.43mi	25yd	0/0
24	8/7	Brown	Green Bay	EF0	6.2mi	90yd	0/0
25	9/24	Dunn/ Chippewa	Elk Mound	EF3	7.02mi	600yd	0/2
26	9/24	Clark	Greenwood	EF1	4.71mi	60yd	0/0
27	10/1	Jefferson	Fort Atkinson	EF0	7.23mi	80yd	0/0
28	10/1	Jeff/Waukesha	Ottawa	EF1	13.0mi	100yd	0/0

Wisconsin Tornadoes 2019

Updated: 1/3/20



Tornado Days: 11



Total: 28

- EF0: 17
- EF1: 10
- EF2: 0
- EF3: 1
- EF4: 0
- EF5: 0



National Weather Service



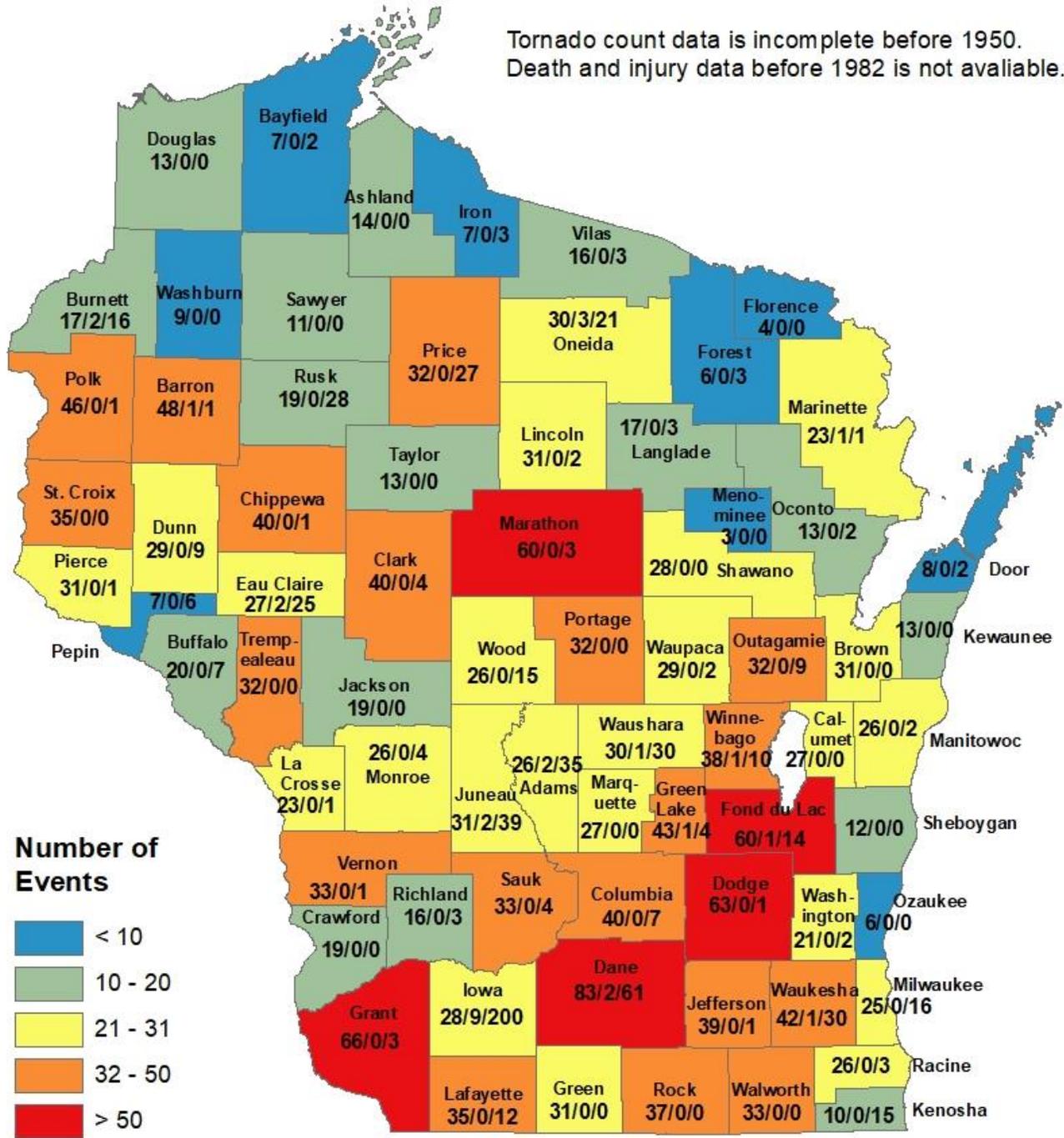
Wisconsin Tornado Events

1844 - 2019

Events / # Deaths / # Injuries



Tornado count data is incomplete before 1950.
Death and injury data before 1982 is not available.



Severe Weather Watches and Warnings

When conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, the National Weather Service (NWS) will issue a WATCH. When a Watch is issued, make sure you have a source of weather information in the event storms begin to form.

When severe weather has formed, NWS meteorologists will issue a WARNING to immediately alert the public and to advise them to seek appropriate shelter.

Watches and Warnings are relayed to local radio and television stations and are broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio.

Public safety officials also get the Warnings and can activate local warning systems, like outdoor sirens, to alert communities.

Tornado Watch: Severe thunderstorms with tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. Be prepared to move to safety if a **Warning** is issued. Know what counties are in the watch area by listening to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or local radio or television stations.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Thunderstorms with large hail and damaging winds are possible. Be prepared to move to safety if a **Warning** is issued.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Move to a place of safety now!

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: A thunderstorm with large hail and damaging winds has been reported or indicated by weather radar.

Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm!

Tornado Safety Before the Storm

Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and outdoors. Know the safest shelter areas in multiple locations.

- Have frequent drills.
- Keep a disaster supply kit in your home including water, food that won't spoil and needs no heat to serve, first-aid kit, NOAA Weather Radio (also known as an emergency weather radio), a flashlight and special items for children, pets and elderly family members.
- Be sure your weather radio is working properly. Spring is a great time to install fresh batteries.

Tornado Safety During the Storm

Whether at home, work, or school, it's important to have a plan in place for what to do when severe weather is approaching.

- In a home or building, move to a pre-designated shelter, such as a basement, and get under a sturdy table or the stairs. A specially-constructed "safe room" within a building offers the best protection.
- If a basement is not available, move to a small interior room on the lowest floor and cover yourself with anything close at hand: towels, blankets, pillows. If possible, get under a sturdy table, desk or counter. Put as many walls as possible between you and the storm. Stay away from windows.
- If caught outdoors, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If you cannot quickly walk to shelter, get into a vehicle, buckle your seatbelt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. Now you have two options as a last resort:
 - Stay in the vehicle with the seatbelt on and place your head below the windows.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the roadway, exit the vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under an overpass.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home and go to the designated storm shelter or the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building.
- Make sure you have multiple ways to receive weather information. A NOAA Weather Radio, access to local TV, and smart phone apps can keep you informed when severe weather threatens.

Lightning Safety Tips

Lightning can be a major safety concern during storms. Know the risks and how to protect yourself from lightning strikes.

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous. In an average year, lightning kills nearly 50 people in the U.S. Since 2005, lightning has killed nine people and injured at least 41 in Wisconsin.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.
- If you hear thunder, you are in danger! Anytime thunder is heard, the storm is close enough to pose an immediate threat to your location.

- Have a lightning safety plan. Designate a safe location before the event
- starts. Have specific guidelines for suspending the activity so that everyone has time to reach safety.
- Prior to a practice or outdoor event, check the latest forecast. If thunderstorms are expected, consider postponing activities early to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- If you hear thunder, suspend your activity immediately and instruct everyone to get to a safe place. Substantial buildings provide the best protection. Avoid sheds, open shelters, dugouts, bleachers, and grandstands. If a sturdy building is not nearby, a hard-topped metal vehicle with windows closed will offer good protection. Do not crouch or lie down—continue moving to a place of shelter.
- If boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter.
- Do not resume activities until 30 minutes have passed since the last thunder was heard.

Flooding Safety Tips

Flooding is one of Wisconsin's most common natural disasters, causing millions of dollars in property damage each year. Know the facts and keep yourself safe when floodwaters rise!

- Wisconsin had two fatalities in 2019 that were due to flooding.
- Many floods occur along streams and rivers. You can determine your risk by knowing your proximity to the water.
- Urban areas have a risk for flash floods due to increased runoff from buildings, roads and parking lots. Low spots, such as underpasses and basements, can become death traps.
- Dam failures have played a deadly role in the history of flash flooding. Be aware of dams upstream from your location. Earthen dams and associated embankments are more easily compromised by heavy rainfall.
- When camping or hiking near a stream or river, listen to the latest weather forecasts and keep away from the water if thunderstorms are expected. If a warning is issued or flooding is observed, move to higher ground.
- Do not attempt to walk or drive through a flooded roadway or intersection. Only six inches of fast-flowing water can knock an adult off their feet. And it takes just two feet of moving water to float a vehicle. Turn around, don't drown!
- Beware of flooding potential along the Lake Michigan shoreline in the wake of a line of strong thunderstorms with high winds that move across the lake. The winds push water to the east shoreline, which then rebounds to the west shore as a flood wave called a "seiche."
- During times of heavy rain, those near areas with steep terrain should watch for rock or mudslides.

Stay informed with an All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio

Many people believe outdoor sirens will notify them when a tornado is approaching, however those devices are only designed to be heard by people who are outside. Make sure you have a way to receive notifications inside your home, school or office by getting a NOAA Weather Radio. These devices act like a “smoke alarm” for severe weather!

- NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is a public warning system that broadcasts forecasts, warnings, and emergency information 24 hours a day.
- Radio receivers can quietly monitor these broadcasts and will alert when important and life-threatening messages are issued for your area.
- “All Hazards” messages include:
 - Natural disasters (e.g., tornado, floods, blizzards)
 - Accidents, such as chemical release, train derailments, nuclear power emergencies)
 - Terrorist Attacks
- During an emergency, seconds count! These radios are a valuable alerting device, easy to use, and can also be used to check on every-day weather, including wind chill information during the winter. If your school doesn’t have a weather radio, make sure to purchase one before the severe weather season starts.
- Place your radio in areas that are constantly monitored (e.g., school office, principal’s office). Remember those occasions when the school is used for activities outside normal hours and make sure the radio can be monitored during those times.
- The radios are tested weekly. Make sure yours works!
- If you have any questions about weather radios, contact your local National Weather Service office. Many Wisconsin offices may have radios available for schools.

NOAA Weather Radio Home Page - www.weather.gov/nwr

NWR coverage in Wisconsin - www.weather.gov/mkx/nwr

Education Communications Board map - <https://ecb.org/NOAA.html>

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are weather and non-weather messages sent directly to cell phones in areas affected by an emergency. These short messages may look like text messages, but unlike texts which are sent directly to your phone number, they are broadcast to all phones within range of cell towers in the alerted area. The alerts will tell you the type of warning, the affected area and the duration of the event. Weather alerts sent as WEAs in Wisconsin include Tornado Warnings and Flash Flood Warnings.

For more information on WEAs and a list of participating carriers, visit FEMA’s Wireless Emergency Alert web site: <http://fema.gov/wireless-emergency-alerts>.

[For more information](#)

Check out these web sites for more safety tips, the latest weather forecast, and other weather awareness information.

NOAA National Weather Service

<https://weather.gov>

Click on your part of the state for local weather information

Find the NWS on Facebook and Twitter by searching for your local office name!

ReadyWisconsin

Web - <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin>

Twitter – <https://www.twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin>

Instagram - <http://www.instagram.com/ReadyWisconsin>

STEP (Student Tools for Emergency Planning)

<https://readywisconsin.wi.gov/STEP>

Wisconsin Emergency Management

<https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/wem>

For Kids: Be a Force of Nature!

<http://weather.gov/grb/prep>

Tornado Preparedness Plan for Schools

<http://www.weather.gov/arl/schoolprep>

FEMA for Kids

<https://www.ready.gov/kids>