

Press Release



Ponca City Public School District Reviews Severe Weather Procedures

The Ponca City Public School District would like to remind patrons of the procedures for dealing with severe weather and tornado watches and warnings. Tornado watches and warnings always bring questions because it is seasonal and we don't deal with it every day. The district takes every precaution to keep students and staff safe.

Bret Smith, Executive Director of Operations, explained, "As a courtesy to our patrons, students and staff, we try to make our schools open to the public in the event of a tornado warning. Our schools are opened by individuals who have graciously volunteered to open our buildings for shelter. However, because they are volunteers, we will not require them to open the building if it means putting their lives in jeopardy. That being said PLEASE DO NOT COUNT ON THE SCHOOLS BEING OPEN!"

"Opening our school buildings during severe weather is difficult," Smith continued. "While we cannot require anyone to open our buildings, we will try our best to be there. People get hurt and/or killed when they are out in the storm. For that reason, we do not condone anyone going outside, driving a car, or walking for any distance while storms are in progress. We strongly encourage anyone needing shelter in the event of a tornado, to go to a close neighbor's shelter or install one themselves and not drive in the storm to get to a school or any other location. We understand some people do not have a choice and will go to a school, church, hospital, or city building seeking safety. That is why we try to open the schools if possible."

In the event of a tornado warning, all schools, with the exception of Lincoln, may be open to the public after school hours and on weekends. Since West Middle School is so close to Lincoln, West will serve as the shelter for Lincoln and West patrons. The schools cannot be open to patrons when school is in session. There is not enough room for students, staff and patrons.

All of the Ponca City Public School buildings may not be handicapped accessible in the basement areas. For that reason, the schools cannot accommodate wheelchairs at this time.

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