



December 2019

I am writing this letter to endorse the use of the Outdoor Warning Siren Best Practice document and encourage your counties and communities to adopt the best practices outlined and recommended in the report.

Outdoor warning sirens are part of an integrated public warning system, however, in Wisconsin there is NO centralized statewide system or standard. Currently in Wisconsin, outdoor warning sirens are owned and operated by many entities with very little policy and direction for use. The result the lack of standards has resulted in vital public warning signals being very different across the state, creating conflicts in public information and siren usage.

In 2016 a group of county emergency managers, the National Weather Service, meteorologists and media partners, met to form an Integrated Warning Team (IWT) for weather, one of the major points of discussion was the use of outdoor warning sirens. A small workgroup formed to work on gathering information on outdoor warning siren use in Wisconsin. The workgroup sent out multiple surveys to stakeholders and studied the use of outdoor warning sirens in other states. From their research, the workgroup created an outdoor warning siren best practice document. The intent of the document was to create best practice recommendations in order to improve public safety and warning effectiveness by encouraging voluntary statewide adoption of a simple, clear, consistent and credible policy and practice.

Voluntarily adopting and implementing the best practice recommendations will allow all communities to foster a statewide understanding of the purpose of outdoor warning sirens among emergency personnel, media partners and the public. A common standard for use will reduce public confusion and reduce siren fatigue, thus increasing confidence and trust in the use of sirens. The statewide adoption of the outdoor warning siren policy would give specific direction and allow for a clear public messaging, in order to effectively warn the public of imminent danger.

Thank you for your consideration and implementation of the Outdoor Warning Siren Best Practices in your communities. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local or county Emergency Management Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Amy B. Nehls'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy B. Nehls, President