



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
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M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

TO: Superintendents and Principals of Connecticut's Public and Private Schools

FROM: M. Jodi Rell, Governor *mjr*

DATE: August 15, 2008

SUBJECT: NOAA Public Alert Radios

The Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) in cooperation with the National Weather Service (NWS) and our federal agency partners are preparing to install over 1,900 NOAA Public Alert Radios in the following categories of schools: public and non-public pre-schools, K-12 nonpublic schools, K-12 public and nonpublic District Offices, and public and nonpublic post secondary schools in Connecticut. Nationally, 183,000 radios will be distributed; this is a continuation of the 2005-2006 distribution of Alert Radios to the 97,000 K-12 public schools across the United States. These radios are part of the DEMHS and SDE continuing effort to provide the best possible warnings to Connecticut's schools in the event of severe weather or other emergencies.

Connecticut was one of the first states to install NOAA Weather Radios in Public Schools, State Parks and 911 Centers in 1992 and 1994. Over 300 radios were installed statewide as a result of a deadly series of tornadoes which occurred on July 10, 1989. The NWS used three existing NOAA Weather Radio Transmitters to provide targeted watches and warnings to specific areas when severe weather threatened Connecticut. In 1999 Connecticut installed a fourth NOAA Weather Radio transmitter in Litchfield County to provide improved warnings for schools, parks and 911 centers in the Northwest Hills.

Although many of the 300 original radios are still in service, these radios are now 16 years old. The newer radios are now known as NOAA Public Alert radios. These radios will be distributed in the coming weeks to the categories of schools noted above and are now capable of providing civil emergency, hazardous materials, and missing children alerts in addition to their original weather alerting capabilities.

This Fall, these radios will be sent directly to the principals of the categories of schools noted above. If you need assistance in programming your radio, DEMHS Regional Coordinators are available during regular business hours to assist in programming and testing your new radio (please see map and information on page 5). In addition, DEMHS and SDE have posted links on their websites to programming instructions for each type of radio being distributed. The DEMHS site is www.ct.gov/demhs and the SDE site is <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/>. If your school is in one of the categories shown above and does not receive a radio within the next few months, you can register for a radio at <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/proginfo-08.htm>. NOAA will be updating this website in the next few weeks with a listing of schools who will receive radios.

The National Weather Service conducts weekly tests of the NOAA Public Alerting system each Wednesday between 11 a.m. and Noon. If your radio does not receive the test alert, please contact your DEMHS Regional Coordinator for assistance.

Funding for this initiative is being provided by the Federal Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Education.