



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REFERENCE GUIDE

TITLE: NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards Alerts

NUMBER: REF-5435.2

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this Reference Guide is to provide guidance on emergency alerts received through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alert radios and other means.

MAJOR CHANGES: This Reference Guide replaces REF-5435.1, *NOAA Public Alert Radios*, dated January 24, 2014, and includes additional methods of receiving weather alerts in LAUSD.

INSTRUCTIONS: I. Background

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast National Weather Service alerts and other hazard information, such as hazardous materials spills and Amber Alerts. Alerts can also be generated by federal or state events, such as a terrorist attack. NOAA alerts are a key notification system for receiving timely information about weather emergencies and other potential hazards. In the event of an emergency, schools are to follow the directions in the Safe School Plan, Volume 2 - Emergency Procedures and consult their Local District for additional guidance and support. Always act to limit student and staff exposure to hazardous conditions. More information on weather conditions that impact schools is available in Reference Guide REF-5706.2, *School Procedures During Inclement Weather Conditions*.

II. NOAA Weather Radios

Many schools have a NOAA Weather Alert radio. Administrators are to keep the alert radio in the main office or other central location where it can be monitored by designated staff. The alert radio is to remain on, so that schools can receive alerts. The radio must be set up to receive alerts for Los Angeles County. For set up, follow the directions provided with the radio.

ROUTING

Local District Superintendents
Administrators of Operations
Operations Coordinators
School Administrators
Non-School Site Administrators



Online directions and assistance for setting up the radio can be found at: www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/schools/index.html. Additional help with radio set-up can be obtained from volunteers at your local Citizen Corps, found at: www.citizencorps.gov.

The radio will activate and provide a visible and audible warning for many types of emergencies. For weather-related emergencies such as flash floods or tornadoes, schools should note that there are three lights on the radio that correspond with the three categories of alerts: watch, advisory, or warning as described below.

III. Alerts Received Through Blackboard Connect Calls

LAUSD has the capability to send NOAA alerts through Blackboard Connect. Selected staff members at every school site will receive NOAA alert Blackboard Connect messages when the school is within the geographic area determined by NOAA to be impacted by the hazard. Messages will be sent through phone, text, and email and will include a link to a NOAA webpage that has more information. Detailed information on Blackboard Connect is available at <http://bbc.lausd.net>.

IV. Categories of Hazardous Weather Alerts Issued by the National Weather Service

The National Weather Service issues three distinct categories of hazardous weather alerts through the NOAA weather alert system, covering all manner of weather events. The “watch” alert reminds schools to remain vigilant for the possibility of a hazardous weather event, as conditions exist that could create a weather emergency. An “advisory” alert is issued when a less-serious weather event is occurring and may cause “significant inconvenience.” A “warning” alert means that a hazardous weather event is occurring.

A. WATCH - used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location or timing is still uncertain. *A “watch” is intended to provide enough lead time to set emergency plans in motion. A watch means that hazardous weather is possible.* Schools should have a plan of action in case a storm threatens, and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.

If a weather watch is issued, schools in the affected area should:

- Review the Safe School Plan and confirm staff assignments for emergency positions.
- Review field trips and extracurricular activities.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

- Review Blackboard Connect emergency contact lists for staff and students.
- Monitor local weather via www.weather.gov and/or a NOAA weather radio.
- Inspect the campus for conditions that could cause damage.

B. **ADVISORY** - issued when a hazardous weather event is occurring, imminent or likely. Advisories are for less serious conditions than warnings that cause significant inconvenience. If caution is not exercised, conditions could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.

If a weather advisory is issued, schools in the affected area should:

- Review the Safe School Plan.
- Check emergency supplies.
- Examine extracurricular activities, field trips, and after-school programs.
- Plan for modified activity schedule.
- Move outdoor equipment out of harm's way.
- Monitor local weather via www.weather.gov and/or a NOAA weather radio.
- Check school site for hazards and exposures that can be mitigated.
- Send a Blackboard Connect message to parents if the school is impacted by the weather.

C. **WARNING** - issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.

If a weather warning is issued, schools in the affected area should:

- Activate the Safe School Plan.
- Stage emergency supplies in a location protected from weather.
- Send Blackboard Connect messages, update school website and school social media accounts to notify parents.
- Notify the Local District of actions.
- Take proactive steps to protect students and staff.
- Cancel activities, field trips and after-school programs if expedient to do so.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

RELATED RESOURCES:

The NOAA web site at: www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/schools/index.html has additional alert radio information and support for schools.

REF-5706.2, *School Procedures During Inclement Weather Conditions*, dated November 16, 2015, issued by the Office of School Operations.

ASSISTANCE:

For assistance or further information, please contact Jill Barnes, Coordinator, School Operations - Office of Emergency Services at (213) 241-3889.