Phillips County Communications Center will test its tornado siren and procedures in Holyoke and Paoli on Friday, May 1. The Holyoke test will be done at 10 a.m., followed by the Paoli test at about 10:15 a.m.

During the Holyoke test, the first siren will blow continuously for three minutes. During an actual tornado emergency, this signal means a tornado has been sighted within 10 miles of Holyoke.

The second signal, in which the siren will blow for 30 seconds with a 30-second break and then blow again for 30 seconds, means the tornado has left the area.

CommCenter director Kenny Gaskill said the tornado siren should sound significantly different than the whistle that blows at 7 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. Residents are reminded to call 911 immediately if they see a tornado.

If the weather is stormy on Friday, Gaskill noted the siren test will be postponed so residents will not confuse the test with a real tornado emergency.

**Colorado severe weather facts**

Each year, nearly 2,000 people are killed or injured in this country by the products of thunderstorms. Tornadoes, lightning, strong winds and hail can be deadly forces that could occur at any time.

At any given moment, an average of 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring around the globe. Of the estimated 100,000 storms that occur in the U.S. every year, about 10 percent are classified as severe.

Colorado ranks ninth in the United States for frequency of tornadoes, 38th for number of tornado deaths, 31st for injuries and 30th for cost of tornado damages.

The threat of tornadoes increases rapidly during the late spring months across the Southern and Central Plains. In Colorado, the greatest threat of tornadoes occurs from mid-May through early August, with June being the most active month.

Although tornadoes have occurred at every hour of the day, almost 90 percent occur between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. They also occur statewide, but by far the largest number develop in Eastern Colorado, east of Interstate 25.

Most tornadoes are considered weak. Approximately 88 percent of tornadoes have a short lifespan of under 10 minutes and result in less than five percent of all tornado fatalities.

Wind speeds associated with weak tornadoes are generally less than 110 mph. Winds of this magnitude will damage a wood-frame construction home and may completely destroy a mobile home.

About 11 percent of tornadoes are considered strong. These tornadoes may last more than 20 minutes and are responsible for nearly 30 percent of all tornado deaths. Wind speeds associated with strong tornadoes can reach 200 mph and will cause considerable damage.

Violent tornadoes account for only one percent of all tornadoes, but they result in nearly 70 percent of all tornado fatalities because they can destroy much of what is in their path. Violent tornadoes can remain on the ground for over an hour and travel more than 50 miles before dissipating.