



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: February 16, 2018
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: 2018 Statewide Tornado Drill

The Statewide Tornado Drill is a yearly opportunity to prepare Virginians for tornado emergencies and to test public warning systems.

The *Code of Virginia* in § 22.1-137.1 requires all public schools to participate in at least one tornado drill each year. The 2018 Statewide Tornado Drill, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), will take place on Tornado Preparedness Day, **Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 9:45 a.m.** (If widespread severe weather threatens the Commonwealth on that date, the drill will be on Wednesday, March 21, at 9:45 a.m.). Participation in the **March 20** statewide drill will fulfill the requirement for schools to participate. *Schools may choose an alternate date or time if this is not convenient.*

In 2016, Virginia was hit by the deadliest tornado event since 1959, resulting in five fatalities and more than 45 injuries. An EF-1 tornado touched down on the Town of Waverly in Sussex County, an EF-3 tornado affected Appomattox County and another EF-3 tornado hit the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck region. The National Weather Service (NWS) verified that a total of eight tornadoes struck Virginia during that storm.

The Virginia Department of Education supports participation in Tornado Preparedness Day. Schools may participate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, if it suits the schools schedule. They may use the day for educating staff and students about tornadoes as well as holding a drill. Online registration for the drill is available at the VDEM Website.

If you have questions about Tornado Preparedness Day or the statewide drill, please contact Adam Zubowsky, External Affairs Specialist, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management Services, by email at Adam.Zubowsky@vdem.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 897-9731, or Rebecca Counts Kahila, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Virginia Department of Education, by telephone at (804) 225-4654 or by email at Rebecca.Kahila@doe.virginia.gov.

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