



STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Brian M. Satula
Administrator

Scott Walker
Governor

For more information contact: Tod Pritchard
Office: 608-242-3324
Cell: 608-219-4008

For Immediate Release
4-4-14

Wisconsin's Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week

April 21-25, 2014

Listen, Act and Live!

(MADISON) – **Listen, Act and Live!** Those words could protect you and your family during severe storm season. Listening to warnings and seeking shelter immediately will save lives. That's why Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), ReadyWisconsin, the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association (WBA) have teamed up for Wisconsin's Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week April 21-25, 2014.

Did you know that...

- Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes annually.
- In 2013, 16 tornadoes touched down in Wisconsin including six during the night and early morning hours of August 6-7 when an EF2 struck near New London in Waupaca and Outagamie counties. That tornado injured two residents and caused millions of dollars in damage.
- In 2012, only 4 tornadoes were reported in Wisconsin by the NWS. The strongest tornado hit near Patch Grove in Grant County on September 4. No fatalities or injuries were reported.
- In 2011, 38 tornadoes in Wisconsin were confirmed by the NWS, the fourth highest number on record. On August 19, a man was killed when a tornado with winds of 105 mph struck Marinette County.
- The peak tornado season in Wisconsin is April to August, but tornadoes can occur any time of year, like the January 7, 2008 storms near Kenosha.

On Thursday, April 24, 2014, a statewide tornado drill is planned. At 1:00pm, the National Weather Service will issue a statewide mock tornado watch and at 1:45pm a statewide mock tornado warning. Many radio and TV stations will participate in the drill. In addition, NOAA weather radios (also known as emergency weather radios) will issue alert messaging. This is an ideal opportunity for schools, businesses and families to practice safe procedures for severe weather.

Important: The tornado drill will take place even if the sky is cloudy, dark and/or rainy. If actual severe storms are expected in the state on Thursday April 24, the tornado drill will be postponed until Friday, April 25 with the same times. If severe storms are possible Friday the drill will be cancelled. Residents will be notified of any changes through local media as well as the ReadyWisconsin web page, Facebook and Twitter.



2014 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Drill

Scheduled for Thursday April 24, 2014

The 2014 Tornado Drill will consist of a **mock tornado watch** and a **mock tornado warning** for all of Wisconsin. This is a great opportunity for your school, business and community to practice your emergency plans.

DRILL SCHEDULE:

1:00 p.m. – National Weather Service issues a mock tornado watch for all of Wisconsin (a watch means tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms).



1:45 p.m. - National Weather Service issues mock tornado warning for all of Wisconsin (a warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated on weather radar. Move to a safe place immediately).

2:00 p.m. – End of mock tornado watch/warning drill

The tornado drill will take place even if the sky is cloudy, dark and/or rainy. If actual severe storms are expected in the state on Thursday, April 24, the tornado drill will be postponed until Friday, April 25 with the same times. If severe storms are possible Friday, the drill will be cancelled. Residents will be notified of any changes through local media as well as the ReadyWisconsin web page, Facebook and Twitter.

Most local and state radio, TV and cable stations will be participating in the drill. Television viewers and radio station listeners will hear a message at 1:45 p.m. indicating that "This is a test." The mock tornado warning will last about one minute on radio and TV stations across Wisconsin and when the test is finished, stations will return to normal programming.

In addition, alerts for both the mock tornado watch and warning will be issued over NOAA weather radios. Be sure your weather radio is turned on for this test. If the alarm on your weather radio does not go off for this test, check your weather radio's programming and quality of reception.



This is a great opportunity for you to practice your tornado emergency plan with family, friends, and co-workers. Schools will also participate in the drill. During storm season – follow this message: **Listen, Act and Live.** Don't ignore watches and warnings. Listen and take action. Every second counts. Don't wait... go to a safe place right away!

The drill will also occur at the same time in Minnesota and will be broadcast on radio and TV stations in that state as well.

(more)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Tornado Test

How does the National Weather Service deliver this tornado test and real tornado watches and warnings? They use a notification program called the Emergency Alert System or EAS.

What is the Emergency Alert System (EAS)? EAS is a national public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Alerting authorities like the National Weather Service can also use the state and local EAS to send alerts and warnings to radio and television stations, cable television, and NOAA weather radios (also known as emergency weather radios).



Why do this test? The National Weather Service, Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association believe it is important to allow the public to test their NOAA weather radio receivers which can only be activated using a real tornado warning code. The code also triggers the alert to air on most broadcast radio, TV and cable stations. The goal of any drill is to test all electronic systems that alert Wisconsin citizens to impending severe weather that can result in the loss of life and property.

What can I expect to hear/see? The test may look like regular, local EAS test that most people are already familiar with, but there will be some differences in what viewers will see and hear. The audio message will repeat "This is a test." The video message scroll may not indicate "This is a test" due to programming limitations. The message will last for approximately one minute and then regular programming will resume.

Where will I hear/see the test? On all participating radio, television, cable providers (who are called EAS Participants) and NOAA Weather Radios.



When will the test occur? April 24th at 1:00 p.m. CDT for the mock tornado watch, and at 1:45 p.m. CDT for the mock tornado warnings. At 2:00 p.m. CDT, tornado test will end.

What else might happen? Many communities activate their outdoor warning sirens for the test at 1:45pm.

What would cause the test to be postponed or cancelled? The tornado drill will take place even if the sky is cloudy, dark and/or rainy. We realize a cloudy, dark sky with rain may look threatening to some people. However, this is not a hazardous situation that results in a direct loss of life and/or property.

If actual severe storms are expected in Wisconsin on Thursday, April 24, the tornado drill will be postponed until Friday, April 25 at the same times. If severe storms are possible Friday, the drill will be cancelled. Severe weather is defined as tornadoes, damaging thunderstorm wind gusts of 58 mph or more, or large hail 1 inch in diameter or larger. Residents will be notified of any changes through local media as well as the ReadyWisconsin web page (<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>), as well as ReadyWisconsin Facebook and Twitter.

Are any other states participating in this test? Yes, the drill will also occur at the same time in Minnesota and will be broadcast on radio and TV stations in that state as well.

Will the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) be activated in my cell phone? No, the drill will not activate an emergency notification on your cell phone. But during actual tornado warnings your phone will alert you to the danger in your area.

Tornado Safety at Home, Work, or at Play

Listen, Act, and Live

- In a home or building, avoid windows. Move to a basement, and get under a sturdy table or the stairs. A specially-constructed "safe room" within a building offers the best protection. Use an internet search engine and search for "safe room" for more information.
- If a basement is not available, move to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and cover yourself with towels, blankets or pillows. If possible, get under a sturdy table, desk or counter. Put as many walls as possible between you and the storm. Wearing a bike helmet will help protect your head.
- If caught outdoors, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If you cannot quickly walk to shelter, get into a vehicle, buckle your seatbelt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. Now you have two options as a last resort:
 - Stay in the vehicle with the seatbelt on and place your head below the windows.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the roadway, exit the vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Do not seek shelter under an overpass.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home and go to the designated storm shelter or the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building.
- At school, follow the drill. Go to the interior hall or room. Crouch low, head down, and protect the back of your head with your arms. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditoriums.



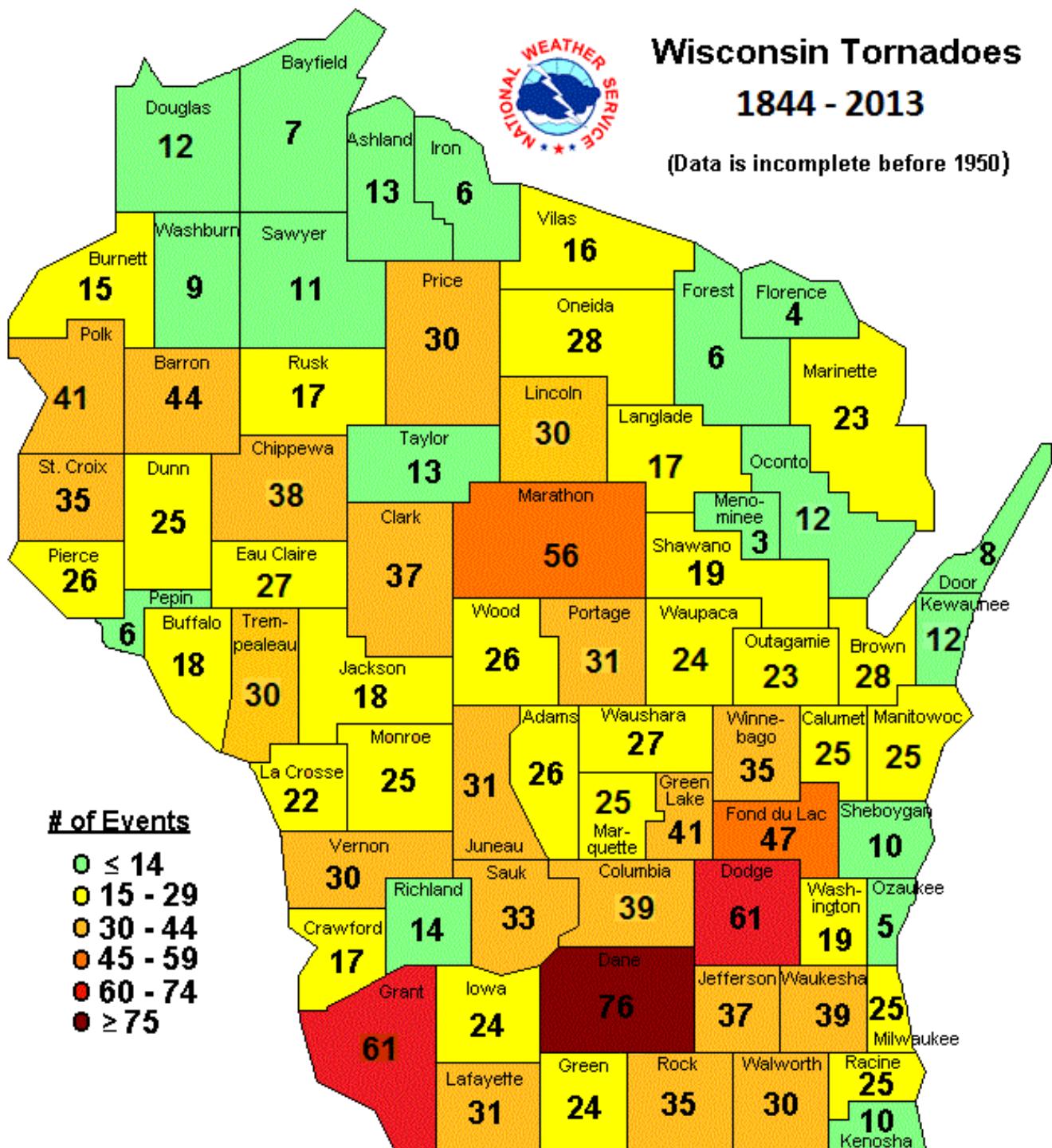
(Joplin Missouri-May 22, 2011 an EF-5 tornado with winds over 200 mph strikes the town about the size of Janesville. (159 people are directly killed and more than 1000 injured)



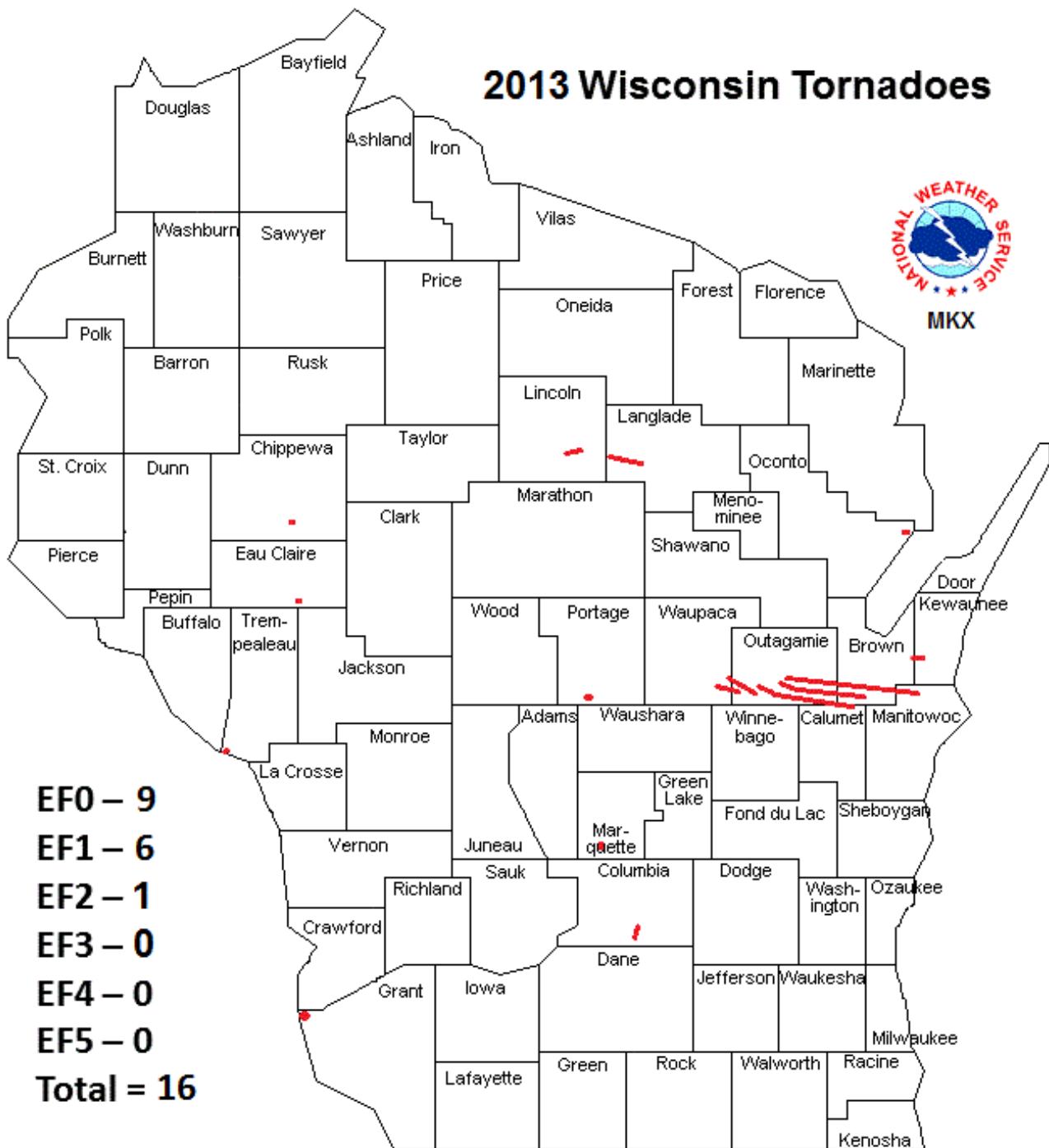
Wisconsin Tornadoes

1844 - 2013

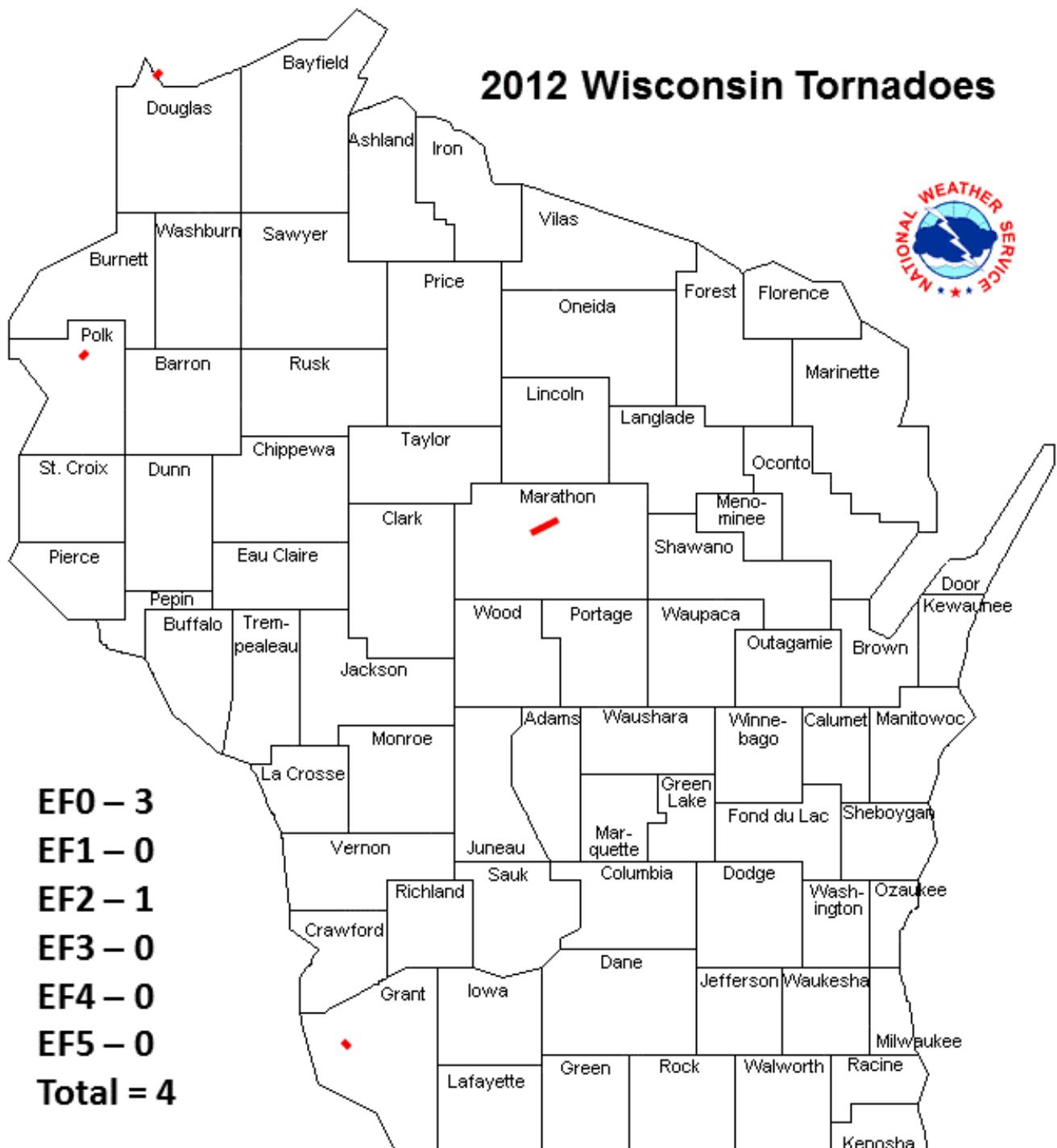
(Data is incomplete before 1950)



2013 Wisconsin Tornadoes

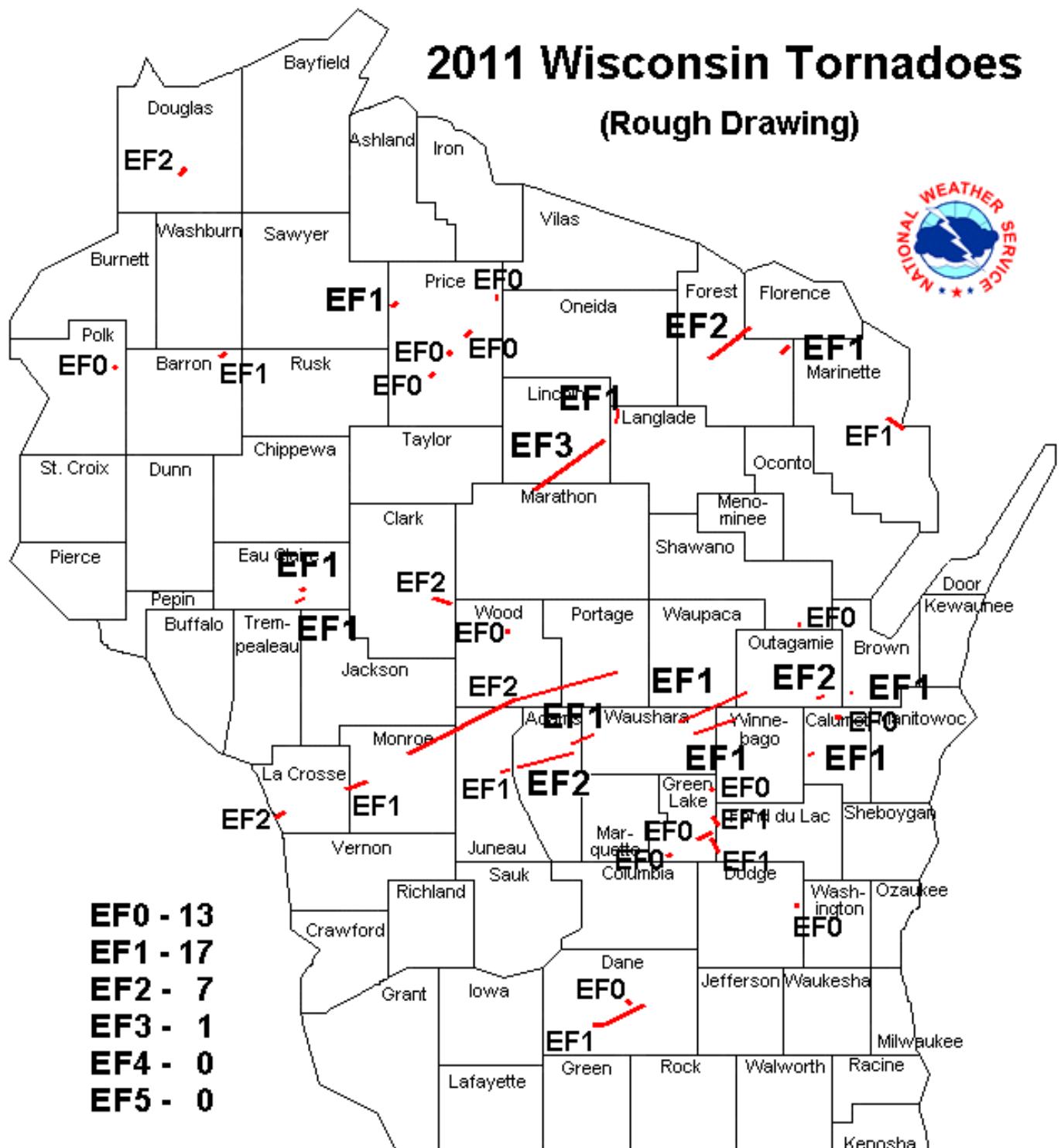


2012 Wisconsin Tornadoes



2011 Wisconsin Tornadoes

(Rough Drawing)



Tornado Safety Before the Storm:

- Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and outdoors. Know the safest shelter areas in multiple locations.
- Have frequent drills.
- Keep a disaster supply kit in your home including water, food that won't spoil and needs no heat to serve, first-aid kit, NOAA weather radio (also known as an emergency weather radio), a flashlight and special items for children, pets and elderly family members.
- Be sure your weather radio is working properly. Spring is a great time to install fresh batteries.

Tornado Watch: Severe thunderstorms with tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. Be prepared to move to safety if a Warning is issued. Know what counties are in the watch area by listening to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or local radio or television stations.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Thunderstorms with large hail and damaging winds are possible. Be prepared to move to safety if a Warning is issued.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Move to a place of safety now!

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: A thunderstorm with large hail and damaging winds has been reported or indicated by weather radar.

Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm!

Additional maps and information are also posted at <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. If you need further information, please contact your county or tribal emergency management director or Tod Pritchard at tod.pritchard@wisconsin.gov or 608-242-3324.

#End#