



Stillwater Emergency Management

Rob Hill, Director | P: (405) 372-7484 | E: sema@stillwater.org

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

RE: 2024 Special Olympics Summer Games – Severe/Extreme Weather Monitoring, Coordination, and Notification

To Whom It May Concern,

The **City of Stillwater's Emergency Management department (SEMA)** plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the **2024 Special Olympics Summer Games (SOOK)**.

Here are the key responsibilities SEMA will undertake:

1. **Weather Monitoring:** SEMA will diligently monitor the weather conditions during the event. This includes keeping track of temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and any potential severe weather threats.
2. **Weather Briefings:** Prior to the event, SEMA will provide comprehensive weather briefings to **staff** and **event coordinators**. These briefings will equip them with essential information to make informed decisions and take necessary precautions.
3. **Threat Notifications:** SEMA will promptly notify all participants, event staff, coordinators, and spectators if any **life-threatening** weather conditions arise. Whether it's lightning, extreme heat, or other hazards, SEMA's role is to ensure everyone's safety.

Remember, safety is paramount, and SEMA's vigilance ensures that the SOOK can proceed smoothly while prioritizing the well-being of everyone involved.

Let's address the primary weather threats for May during the SOOK events:

1. **Heat:** May can bring scorching temperatures, especially in Oklahoma. It's essential for participants, staff, and spectators to stay hydrated, seek shade, and take breaks to avoid heat-related illnesses.
2. **Lightning:** Thunderstorms are common in May. If lightning is detected nearby, everyone should seek shelter indoors or in a sturdy structure. Avoid open fields and tall objects.
3. **Severe Thunderstorms:** These storms can bring strong winds, hail, and heavy rainfall. SEMA will closely monitor weather alerts and provide timely information to ensure safety.
4. **Tornadoes:** While tornadoes can occur any time of year, May is peak tornado season. SEMA will have protocols in place to guide everyone to designated tornado shelters if needed, or safety procedures to avoid injury or death.

Remember, SEMA's vigilance and coordination will help mitigate these threats and prioritize life safety during the SOOK. Stay informed, follow instructions, and enjoy the event responsibly!

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The collaboration between **SEMA**, local law enforcement, and fire departments is crucial for ensuring the safety and security of the SOOK. Here are the specific man-made threats they will be vigilant about:

1. **Suspicious Packages/Bags:** SEMA and law enforcement will be on the lookout for any unattended bags or packages that appear suspicious. Swift action will be taken to assess and mitigate any potential risks.
2. **Rogue Vehicles:** Monitoring for unauthorized or suspicious vehicles within the event area is essential. SEMA and law enforcement will promptly address any rogue vehicles that could pose a threat.
3. **Barricade Breaches:** SEMA will coordinate with event staff to prevent unauthorized access to restricted areas. Any breaches of barricades or security perimeters will be swiftly addressed.
4. **Threats Against the Event:** SEMA will actively monitor for any threats directed at the MESO rodeo. Whether through communication channels or other means, they will take necessary precautions.
5. **Active Shooter Situations:** SEMA, law enforcement, and fire departments will have protocols in place to respond effectively to active shooter incidents. Training and coordination are critical to minimizing harm.

By working together, SEMA and other agencies will ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants, coordinators, and spectators during the SOOK events.

Heat:

Here's a summary of SEMA's actions related to **heat**:

1. **Wet Bulb Globe Monitor:** SEMA will have this specialized device on-site to measure heat stress. It considers temperature, humidity, wind speed, and solar radiation to assess the risk to participants.
2. **Monitoring and Communication:** If conditions become unfavorable due to excessive heat, staff will promptly inform coordinators. They'll recommend appropriate work-to-rest ratios to prevent heat-related illnesses, or suspend activities.
3. **Continuous Vigilance:** SEMA's process will remain in effect until the threat subsides or the event concludes. This ensures ongoing safety monitoring.
4. **Cooling Stations:** If necessary, cooling stations will be activated to provide relief from the heat.
5. **Participant Vital Signs:** Medical personnel can check vital signs (e.g., heart rate, body temperature) before and after each event. This helps ensure participants' exertion levels stay within safe limits.

Remember, prioritizing safety is paramount, and SEMA's proactive approach will contribute to a successful and secure 2024 SOOK events!

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Lightning:

- **Lightning Monitoring System:** The City of Stillwater employs an active lightning monitoring system provided by Earth Networks. This system is situated atop City Hall and covers the entire city using a national grid of sensors distributed across the US.
- **Alerts and Safety Measures:**
 - **Alerts:** SEMA staff receive text alerts when lightning poses a threat within a **15-mile radius** of the city limits.
 - **All Clear:** After the last observed lightning strike, they receive an “all clear” text 30 minutes later.
 - **Coverage:** The monitoring system extends to include all of the SOOK event locations.
 - **Safety Protocol:** In the event of an active lightning threat:
 - SEMA will be present at the event.
 - Attendees will be notified via text messages from SOOK staff’s mass notification system and announcements will be made over the radio for event coordinators.
 - Participants will be asked to seek shelter in the closest structure.
 - Once it’s safe, attendees can return to their games.

Safety first!

Severe Thunderstorms:

Safety is paramount, especially during outdoor events where weather conditions can change rapidly. Here’s a summary of SEMA’s procedures:

1. **Monitoring and Communication:**
 - SEMA will be **onsite** and actively monitoring weather conditions throughout all events.
 - Direct communication with the **National Weather Service in Norman** ensures timely updates.
 - Two radar programs, **Radar First** and **Gibson Ridge**, will track convective activity.
2. **Constant Contact with Event Coordinators:**
 - SEMA staff will maintain **continuous communication** with event coordinators.
 - If there’s a **probability of severe weather**, SEMA will be prepared to take action.
3. **Severe Weather Threats:**
 - While lightning is a primary concern, SEMA will also monitor for other severe weather threats.
 - If a **thunderstorm or severe thunderstorm** develops in the immediate area:
 - SEMA will issue a **radio broadcast** to all staff.
 - Participants will be instructed to **take cover**, according to their game locations.
 - Once the threat has passed, attendees can **safely resume** their games.

Safety protocols like these ensure that everyone can enjoy the event while staying informed and protected.

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Tornado:

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- Direct communication with the **National Weather Service in Norman** ensures timely updates.
- Two radar programs, **Radar First** and **Gibson Ridge**, will track convective activity.

2. **Constant Contact with Event Coordinators:**

- SEMA staff will maintain **continuous communication** with event coordinators.
- If there's a **probability of severe weather**, SEMA will be prepared to take action.

3. **Severe Weather Threats:**

- While lightning is a primary concern, SEMA will also monitor for other severe weather threats.
- If a **thunderstorm capable of producing a tornado** develops in the immediate area:
 - SEMA will issue a **radio broadcast** to all event staff.
 - Participants will be instructed to **take cover**, according to their game location.
 - Since some of the events occur in open space, there is nowhere to secure attendees against this threat.
 - The **safest option** is to leave the area and drive back to their housing location, or at the very least, away from the storm.

4. **Post-Threat Assessment:**

- Once the threat has passed, staff will contact event coordinators to determine if it's safe to return to normal activities.

5. **Community Safety and Early Warning:**

- Given the expected attendance, **timely action** is crucial.
- SEMA will work with the National Weather Service to assess probabilities.
- If significant weather is likely, a **re-schedule, or cancellation** may be considered.

Stay vigilant, and let's prioritize safety for all attendees!

Respectfully,

Rob Hill, Director
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