

## **Severe Weather Procedures for Pettis County Courthouse Employees:**

### **Terms:**

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch:** A Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for the formation of a Severe Thunderstorm. Severe Thunderstorm Watches are issued for an entire county and will include multiple counties. Watches are issued for at least 2 or more hours.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning:** Issued when a thunderstorm has reached or will reach severe limits. A Severe Thunderstorm is declared when winds reach 58 MPH or hail reaches 1 inch (about the size of a quarter) or both. Severe thunderstorms have been known to have wind speeds up to 100 MPH and hail the size of softballs. If in the courthouse during a severe thunderstorm warning, employees should stay away from windows. Rarely would you need to evacuate during a severe thunderstorm. Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are normally issued for only the storm path and is represented by a polygon outline on radar maps.

**Tornado Watch:** A Tornado Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for the formation of a tornado. Tornado Watches are issued for an entire county and will include multiple counties. Pettis County will in a normal year have 3-5 Tornado Watches issued. Tornado Watches are issued from between 2 to 16 hours.

**Tornado Warning:** A Tornado Warning is issued when a Severe Thunderstorm appears on radar to rotate in a tighter and tighter fashion, or when a tornado has been spotted on the ground. Tornado Warnings are normally only issued for the projected path of the tornado, but can be issued county-wide. When a tornado warning has been issued you must take action to protect yourself.

### **Actions:**

When a Tornado Watch is issued, the basement doors must be unlocked at the top of the stairs, and the door on the right hand side. Inside that area should be some stackable chairs, and flashlights in case of a power outage. Citizens from outside the Courthouse may also seek refuge in the basement.

The basement is not normally a public access area, and is not handicap accessible. It also has very steep steps and may not be a first choice for some employees to go down. The next best area is the hall way at the elevator on the first floor. People may also go into the Probate Court Vault. This is not a large area, but will provide sufficient protection.