



30 March, 2020

## SWOSU Reminds Area Residents about Use of Campus Facilities as Volunteer Storm Shelters

When tornadic/stormy conditions exist, Southwestern Oklahoma State University reminds Weatherford residents to plan to seek shelter at home or in a personal shelter.

SWOSU has neither the capacity for its campus facilities to serve as volunteer storm shelters nor the personnel available to accommodate sheltering the public outside of the immediate campus, according to SWOSU Police Chief Kendra Brown.

In addition, local community spread of COVID-19 has made choosing a place of refuge much more difficult when severe weather threatens. During tornado threats, SWOSU will take as many precautions as possible to provide refuge for the reduced number of students, faculty and staff remaining on-campus. However, at this time, SWOSU campus building access is restricted to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 to the campus community. Therefore, Brown said it is critical each individual review their home safety plans to prepare for severe weather.

Other factors involved in this practice are that many people face more danger in traveling to a shelter than remaining at home. The following information is taken from the City of Moore website:

“There is less overall risk by sheltering-in-place than by going to a community shelter. The average tornado warning time is generally only 10-15 minutes. That’s just not enough time for a person to receive the warning, make a conscious decision to leave their home, gather the

few things needed (family, keys, etc.), lock the house, get into the car, drive to a shelter (including possibly experiencing a traffic jam of others trying to get to the same shelter!), get out of the car, and make the way into the community shelter. In this scenario, there’s a far greater likelihood of getting caught in your car when the tornado strikes! And experience proves that cars are NOT the place you want to be during severe weather events!”

Brown said it is important that each individual person and family decide what their tornado preparedness procedures will be and to make those plans now.

Additional information about storm safety:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/tornadosafety/index.html>.

<https://www.weather.gov/safety/tornado-prepare>