

OK-WARN for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing FAQ

1. What is OK-WARN?

OK-WARN is an emergency weather/situation notification service to alphanumeric pagers and/or e-mail addresses.

2. Is there any cost involved in joining?

For qualified Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons, there is no cost. However, an alphanumeric pager and service will not be supplied. MetroCall and Pioneer Paging have expressed an interest in helping with this program.

3. How do I join OK-WARN?

Just download the application off this website, complete it, and fax to Putnam Reiter at (405) 521-4053 or mail to:

Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management

OK-WARN Attn: Putnam Reiter

PO Box 53365

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73152-3365

4. Can out-of-state family members join, too?

The database in the OK-WARN program only contains information for Oklahoma. As a result, no family member outside Oklahoma can participate in this free service. There are other companies that can service out-of-state family members (usually for a fee).

5. What equipment do I need to have before I join?

The only requirement is an alphanumeric pager in vibration mode with service. Also, any form of wireless communication device with a valid e-mail address is also compatible with the OK-WARN program. These would include mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).

6. If a siren goes off in my area, one that I cannot hear, will my OK-WARN service notify me as well?

YES! If a tornado warning is issued for your county, the OK-WARN program will automatically notify persons within that county.

7. How long will a message take to get to me?

From the time when the National Weather Service issues a warning for your area and you receive the message, OK-WARN typically takes a minute or two. However, there can be a few delays.

8. Does the location where I live have any effect on the timeliness of my weather pages?

Geographical features do not usually have an effect of when the pages are delivered. However, the location is somewhat dependent on the service coverage of the paging company. For example,

if you live in a valley in Southeastern Oklahoma, then there is a possibility of poor pager coverage (contact your specific paging company about local terrain features).

9. What factors cause these weather messages to be delayed?

There are many links in the chain from when the National Weather Service issues the warning and the warning is sent to your wireless device. If any one of those links is damaged or broken, then there is a possibility of the message not getting to you in a timely manner. The most common errors are NOT within the OK-WARN system, but outside factors. These would include paging tower or paging company going down, trouble with dialing into a paging company (high telephone traffic), busy internet traffic (e-mail messages), and user errors (low battery in the pager, changing of pager/paging company, and damaged pager).

10. Will weather factors cause me to lose my weather pages?

No usually. However, there have been a few occurrences during heavy hail, moderate to heavy snow, and ice that have caused the paging company to lose communication with paging towers. Those delays are typically short lived.

11. Does OK-WARN have any back-up features?

OK-WARN has many built-in back-up features. These are both hardware (battery back-up, secondary computer, phone lines, etc.), and software (multiple attempts for each page, multiple data streams, etc.).

12. Is there a service range limit of OK-WARN? Will rural hearing impaired persons be covered?

The service range is dependent on the paging or wireless service coverage. The “text messaging” coverage on mobile phones is generally limited to your “home coverage”, and it may not cover rural areas of Oklahoma.

13. Where do I need to go to get the proper equipment and sign up?

To any paging company that services Oklahoma.