

I'm Published – Again!

The title of this blog post is kind of a joke, just as it was the first time our local newspaper printed something from me. A few months ago, they printed a picture I took of some baby doves in our tree in the front of the house, and today I am happy to see they printed my letter in the public forum! Here is a copy:

Siren Rules Need Clarification

I appreciated your article about the weather sirens called "Siren Rules Given" that was printed on Tuesday June 22, but it seems that further clarification is necessary to ensure the safety of the community. Because the rules were changed regarding when to activate the sirens – they are now being activated for severe storms, not just tornado warnings – what type of warning system does our town have in the event of an actual tornado? When did the guidelines change and why were they changed?

The seemingly constant activation of the sirens lately (at least 6 times in the past month; with 3 sirens in ONE day on June 23!) is very scary for my 4 children. Other local parents are having the same concerns. Today there was a mild rumble of thunder at my daughter's T-Ball game, and at least one little boy began to cry. We can reassure

our children, but it's concerning that in an actual tornado emergency that many people might not take it seriously since the now so-called 'weather sirens' are being activated weekly if not more often – it's a 'boy who cried wolf' scenario that could lead to a tragic disaster. I would like to see our city go back to the old guidelines on the weather sirens – call them tornado sirens once again and only use them when the threat of tornadic activity is severe enough that us citizens should be

taking shelter in our basements.

I wrote this letter the other night and sent it in before I learned of [what happened to a town in our county](#). Edgerton was hit by a microburst and sustained devastating damage to many trees and a few buildings. Thankfully, there is only one report of an injury that was not life-threatening. I hope that people aren't confused by my letter; clearly the people in Edgerton should have been in their basements on Wednesday night. Their tornado sirens were warranted (as were ours probably since Edgerton is only about 10 miles away) on Wednesday night, and thankfully the injuries were kept to a minimum thanks to the smart people who took cover. But we did not go into the basement on Wednesday night. As I said in the letter, the sirens had gone off 3 times on Wednesday, and the kids panicked each time. And since the sirens had been going off all month and it had been published in the newspaper that the siren was now for severe thunderstorm warnings, we decided that going down to the basement added to the drama and aided in keeping the kids alarmed and up late. After Wednesday's storm moved through, our town was spared any major damage, but this storm did cause tornadoes to the east in Indiana as well as that dangerous microburst in Edgerton. Looking back, we probably should have gone to the basement, but we have been desensitized to the seriousness of the siren, and it didn't seem like a big deal. Part of the purpose of writing this letter was to vent my frustrations, and I also wrote it partly because I want some answers to the questions I raised. I was hoping that maybe someone from our local branch of the National Weather Service will reply or perhaps we'll hear from the fire chief, who was quoted giving the new siren rules in the original newspaper article to which I referred. If there is any follow-up, I will keep you posted, and in the meantime, we will have to continue to calm the kids any time that now weekly 'severe weather siren' gets activated.