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CENTRAL TEXAS FLOOD

Disaster planners say Texas may need more than flood sirens to avoid tragedies

Beyond warning sirens: what disaster planners hope TX will do to prevent tragedies

By Scott Friedman, Eva Parks and Edward Ayala • Published July 30, 2025 • Updated on July 31, 2025 at 5:09 am



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As state lawmakers meet again to address flood preparedness, NBC 5 Investigates reveals why experts say warning sirens are just the first step and why drills, detailed communication, and community planning are critical to saving lives. Senior investigative reporter Scott Friedman has the story.

A committee of state lawmakers will meet Thursday in the area hit hardest by the Hill Country floods to search for solutions to prevent future weather tragedies. Among the items already on the table are new weather warning sirens to help alert people in areas at risk of flooding or other threats.

NBC 5 Investigates spoke to disaster communications experts who agree sirens would be a good first step. But they caution that an intense focus on warning systems alone could blind lawmakers to a second set of weaknesses that may be just as urgent.

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“So, I look at sirens as probably step one. I think that definitely there are some areas that need sirens. But if we stop at step one, we're not going to solve the problem,” said Keri Stephens, a University of Texas professor who studies disaster communications.

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