

POPULATION ALERT SIREN

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021, the Town of Pincourt installed a public alert siren in Shamrock Park to warn residents about events that could threaten health and safety.

WHY DO WE NEED A SIREN?

Mainly, for the following reasons:

- A road or rail accident causing a dangerous goods spill
- Severe weather, such as storms with hazardous winds

However, police forces or National Defence may request the siren be activated for public safety or national security reasons.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN WE HEAR THE ALARM SIGNAL?

To know what to do when you hear the alarm signal, you only have to remember the acronym **SAFE**:

- **Safe:** Immediately find a safe place to take shelter
- **Avoid:** Avoid any contact with the outside environment by closing all your windows and ventilation systems including Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems
- **Follow-up:** Look for follow-up information on the radio, tv, social media, Info-P or any other reliable source of information. It is also very important to keep your phone close.
- **Everyone:** Everyone must stay inside and await further instructions or the “return to normal” signal. Emergency teams could patrol the streets to come to your house and give you more information

IF I CAN’T HEAR THE SIREN ANYMORE, IS EVERYTHING NORMAL?

Not necessarily. By protocol, the siren sounds for 3 minutes initially. It may be activated for an extra minute if, after 30 minutes from the initial alert:

- The leak is not contained (danger persists), and/or
- Conditions get worse (increased danger)

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT’S SAFE AGAIN?

There are two ways:

1. The siren sounds again for 30 seconds, but with a different tone (see next section), and/or

2. Authorities confirm via official channels that the danger has passed.

WHAT IS THE SIREN SIGNAL DURATION AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TONES?

- **Initial Alert:** 3 minutes; the sound alternates up and down, 5 seconds each (VIDEO)
- **Second Alert:** 1 minute; same modulating sound, triggered 30 minutes after the initial alert if risk persists
- **End of Alert:** 30 seconds; the sound is steady (not alternating)

WHO CAN ACTIVATE THE SIREN AT THE TOWN?

Only four individuals are authorized to activate the siren, all in strategic roles within the Town’s civil security team. This strict limit ensures careful management because of the impact on the community and neighbouring areas.

HOW IS THE SIREN ACTIVATED?

The mechanisms are housed in a civil protection building, with backup plans in case of power outage. The siren can be triggered:

- By a computerized panel
- By an electronic console
- Or manually (mechanically)

Redundancy ensures the system works even if one component fails.

WHICH AUTHORITIES CAN ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS DURING A SIREN ALERT?

According to Quebec’s Civil Protection Act, the Town is responsible for alerting the population in the event of a disaster, in consultation with various experts. Sheltering-in-place is justified under specific circumstances:

- There is a real threat to life, health, or safety
- No other means are available to protect the public
- An official recommendation is issued by municipal or external experts
- The operation can be done safely

WHY DO AN ANNUAL TEST?

The alert siren is an essential system exposed to the elements, so, following manufacturer standards, an annual test is performed after regular maintenance. This confirms the system works well or identifies needed repairs. The annual test also serves as a public awareness drill so residents can practice the S.H.E.L.T.E.R. steps and review this information. Thus:

- Each test is announced in advance

- Town staff are present in the test zone

A SIREN—BUT NOT ONLY THAT!

While the siren is effective, its impact is increased with other systems. The siren is always used together with the Town’s automated calling system (Omni-Alert).

Are all family members with cell phones registered for our automated alert system? Registration is free and covers many types of emergencies.

Additionally, with support from Quebec’s Ministry of Public Security, municipal authorities may also request the activation of Québec En Alerte.