Office of Environmental Health & Safety: Weatherstem FAQs

- What is Weatherstem?
  Weatherstem is an advanced network of customized weather stations offering real-time monitoring for severe weather preparedness, education, and public safety (particularly at outdoor athletic events and campus activities). The University of Rochester recently installed a Weatherstem weather monitoring station on the River Campus, within the frame of an old baseball scoreboard on Towers Athletic Field in the Brian F. Prince Athletic Complex.

- How does the weather monitoring station work?
  The unit collects data on atmospheric conditions such as temperature, wind speed, and relative humidity. The station also provides real-time lightning detection and an audible alarm system that sounds during dangerous conditions like severe thunderstorms and tornado warnings. It also has a flashing beacon to indicate an imminent weather hazard.

- How loud is the alarm, and how far away can it be heard?
  The alarm reaches a volume of approximately 115 decibels, which is comparable to a loud rock concert. It sounds like a horn and can be heard within a half mile radius from the weather station site.

- When will the alarm sound?
  The alarm will sound when the weather monitoring station has detected an imminent weather hazard; the horn will blast for about 10 seconds to indicate nearby lightning, and 30 seconds for a tornado warning. Three short tones signal an "all clear." There will also be periodic tests of the system that will be communicated to the University of Rochester community and surrounding geographic areas within the alarm radius in advance.

- What should I do when I hear the alarm?
  Move indoors immediately and find additional information on ongoing conditions via the National Weather Service or local news outlets. If necessary, AlertUR will be used to provide rapid notification and instruction via voice, text, and e-mail message to students, faculty and staff in all University divisions.