



**From:** Press Office

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**Subject:** Governor Bentley Signs Sales Tax Holiday for Severe Weather Preparedness Items into Law

**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ROBERT BENTLEY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2012**

***Suggested Caption for Attached Picture:*** Governor Robert Bentley signs House Bill 436 establishing a statewide sales tax holiday for severe weather preparedness items. (From L to R) State Senator Greg Reed, Revenue Commissioner Julie Magee, Alabama Retail Association President Rick Brown, EMA Director Art Faulkner, and State Representative Bill Poole joined Governor Bentley as he signed the bill.

## **Governor Bentley Signs Sales Tax Holiday for Severe Weather Preparedness Items into Law**

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Thursday signed into law House Bill 436, a measure that will provide an annual sales tax holiday for severe weather preparedness items.

“The bottom line is this sales tax holiday can help save lives. We want to encourage people to stock up on supplies that will help them safely weather a storm and its aftermath,” Governor Robert Bentley said. “Alabama is no stranger to severe storms. Whether it’s a tornado, a hurricane, or even an ice storm, we must all be prepared for whenever severe weather strikes. I commend members of the Legislature for passing this extremely important bill.”

The annual sales tax holiday was a key recommendation of Governor Bentley's Tornado Recovery Action Council. The council was appointed by the Governor following the April 27, 2011, tornado outbreak. The council's mission has been to help further improve the state's readiness for future severe weather.

Under the new law, items related to severe weather preparedness will be exempted from state sales and use taxes over a designated weekend. A provision also allows counties and municipalities to join the state by removing their own local sales and use taxes from the same items during the same weekend.

The sales tax holiday for 2012 will begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 6. The holiday will continue through midnight on Sunday, July 8. By having the holiday in July of this year, retailers will have time to prepare following Thursday's legislative approval and bill signing. Also, local municipalities will have time to organize their own participation if they choose to remove their own local sales and use taxes from the items covered.

Beginning in 2013, the annual sales tax holiday will be held during the last full weekend of February. This will place the holiday in close proximity to the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week and will encourage people to stock up on needed supplies in advance of Alabama's primary severe weather season.

Items covered by the legislation include:

- Several types of batteries, including cell phone batteries and chargers
- Battery-powered radios
- NOAA weather radios
- Flashlights, lanterns, and emergency glow sticks
- First aid kits
- Duct tape
- Plywood, window film or other materials, specifically designed to protect window openings
- Portable generators
- Gas or Diesel fuel containers
- Tarpaulins and plastic sheeting
- Any non-electric food storage cooler or water storage container
- Non-electric can openers
- Any artificial ice, blue ice, ice packs, or reusable ice
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors
- Ground anchor systems such as cords or rope or tie-down kits

The covered items must cost \$60 or less, except for generators, which are covered as long as they cost \$1,000 or less.

Senator Greg Reed of Walker County was the Senate sponsor of the legislation.

“Last April, we saw unparalleled destruction across this state. While our citizens are rebuilding their lives, we want to give them every opportunity to prepare themselves for the next time a storm hits,” Senator Reed said. “This disaster preparedness tax free weekend not only gives our citizens a chance to prepare for storms, but will also provide an economic boost to Alabama businesses.”

Representative Bill Poole of Tuscaloosa County was the House sponsor of the legislation.

“I am proud to have assisted in passing this important bill that I believe will help raise awareness regarding natural disaster preparation,” Representative Poole said. “For one weekend each year at the beginning of tornado season, this bill will allow our citizens to acquire, tax-free, several of the most basic but also most important supplies that are necessary to be prepared for a natural disaster or other emergency. For instance, items covered by this bill include first aid kits, weather radios, flashlights, and other emergency response items. We all have a responsibility to protect our families, neighbors and communities, and I believe that this bill will assist all Alabamians in fulfilling that obligation.”

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*For additional information, contact the Governor’s Press Office at 334-242-7150.*