



## Midland WR120 Recommendation



Fire Safe Occidental (FSO) has been studying, testing and recommending All Hazards NOAA Weather Radios (NWR) since early 2019. We continue looking for Weather Radios that are cheaper, easier to configure and to use. We believe we have found such a radio in the Midland WR120.

The WR120 receives only Weather Radio channels, there is no AM/FM radio which is for the best as it keeps battery usage low. It does have an alarm clock function but we recommend against using it except for reminding you to look at your weather radio.

Battery life for the WR120 is still being tested, but so far we have no reason to expect a negative result. We will update this report as we learn more.

We had previously passed over the WR120 as it has a possibly irritating warning sound if it has not heard a weekly testing alert signal (called a Required Weekly Test, or RWT) from NOAA. However, after discovering the difficulties in getting owners to properly test for RWT, and then turning off the test, led us to understand its value. When using the WR120 it MUST receive an RWT signal within any 10 day window or it will emit a warning beep. This provides the value of the weekly testing alert without having the user to configure it on, then off... and it continues to be checking for the weekly alert forever. We now consider this a very valuable feature, not a problem.

The WR120 is also easier to configure than other radios as it comes to you the owner in an easy to configure mode; just follow the instructions on the first page of the manual.

Reception seems to be similar to all other radios tested, using the same pull-out type of antenna as the other radios do.

It is still important to assure yourself of being able to get reception of the S.A.M.E. encoded alert signals before you buy any Weather Radio. To that end we will lend you a WR120 for two weeks (depending on how many requests we get) for you to assure yourself of this before buying your own WR120.

The cost of the WR120 is low:

Buy it at Occidental Hardware for \$39.99, or online for as little as \$29.99 (just google it). If you can, support our local businesses; Occidental Hardware is a great store!

Our Previous Recommendations on Weather Radios still apply, they are repeated here.

During FSO's extensive NWR testing, we found concerns in all three areas. (1) We had several instances where it seems there was good weather radio reception but the Alerts broadcast were not recognized by the NWR under test. (2) Even experienced "techies" had several instances of low level "pilot error" in configuring the NWR. (3) Finally, batteries are now even more essential to successful operation as we are now operating in an environment where planned PG&E power grid outages may occur during the very time when the NWR is most likely to receive an Alert. If there is an electrical power outage for any reason lasting for days, an NWR left in operational mode listening for Alerts will consume its batteries very quickly. If there is no power and no backup batteries there can be no Alert received.

All this has led FSO to the conclusion that there must be special efforts taken to guarantee the NWR setup is successful. FSO believes that we can no longer issue a blanket recommendation for all citizens to simply buy an NWR, read our configuration

instructions and wait for it to work. Rather, FSO now believes that you should follow the steps below:

- A. Know in advance if you have adequate weather radio reception where you live. Check with nearby neighbors who might be successfully using an NWR, making sure they have successfully tested and received NWR Alerts, or ask FSO to help you find out by testing using FSO-owned NWR equipment.
- B. Follow the FSO provided configuration procedures and do the test specified before assuming you can be confident in receiving Alerts. (If the testing fails or you want help right from the start, ask FSO to help you configure and test your NWR.)
- C. Follow very exactly FSO recommended battery procedures for what to buy and how and when to test.
- D. Test the Alert system regularly during fire season. (Each radio allows you to configure it to receive regular weekly tests on Wednesday between 10 and 11 am.)
- E. Remember, there is no substitute for being alert and staying aware of what is going on. Staying connected with your neighborhood increases the number of eyes and ears keeping you safe!

The above procedures will greatly increase the likelihood an NWR will work in your home. We will post these modified detailed procedures on the FSO website and send them to you via email soon. Please wait for these before purchasing an NWR.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions at:

[info@FireSafeOccidental.org](mailto:info@FireSafeOccidental.org)