

Severe Weather Watches, Advisories & Warnings

Tornado Watch

Issued by the [Storm Prediction Center](#) when [conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms and tornadoes](#) over a larger-scale region covering numerous counties or a large part of a state. These are usually in effect for a period of 6 to 8 hours.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Issued by the [Storm Prediction Center](#) when [conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms](#) over a larger-scale region. Tornadoes are not expected in such situations, but isolated tornado development cannot be ruled out. These are issued for numerous counties or a large part of a state, and are usually in effect for a period of 6 to 8 hours.

Significant Weather Advisory

Issued for strong thunderstorms with the threat for wind gusts of 40-55 mph and/or hail less than 1.00 inch in diameter. These are usually issued for a 60 minute time period.

Tornado Warning

Issued for counties or portions of a county when there is evidence based on radar or a reliable spotter report that a tornado is imminent or occurring. These are usually issued for 30 to 45 minutes in length.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Issued for counties or portions of a county when there is evidence based on radar or a reliable spotter report that a thunderstorm is producing, or about to produce, wind gusts around 60 mph or greater, structural wind damage, and/or hail 1.00 inch in diameter or greater. These are usually issued for 30 to 60 minutes in length.

Severe Weather Statement

Issued for [follow-up information on existing Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado Warnings](#). This can include actual severe weather reports, current radar information, and towns expected to be in the path of the storms. This statement is also used to cancel warnings, and to give follow-up information after a warning has expired.

Special Weather Statement

Used to [alert the public to funnel clouds which form in non-severe weather conditions, which are not expected to touch down](#). It may also be issued periodically on a significant weather event that is expected in the next few days.

Flood Watches, Advisories & Warnings

Flash Flood Watch

Issued generally when there is the possibility of flash flooding or urban flooding over an area within the next 6 to 36 hours.

Flood Watch

Issued when there is the possibility of widespread general flooding over an area within the next 6 to 36 hours.

Flood Advisory

Issued when flooding is imminent or occurring, generally within the next 1 to 3 hours, but is not expected to substantially threaten life and property.

Flash Flood Warning

Issued when very rapid flash flooding is imminent or occurring, generally within the next 1 to 6 hours. Usually issued based on observed heavy rainfall (measured or radar estimated), but may also be issued for significant dam or levee breaks that have occurred or are imminent.

Flood Warning (Issued in two instances):

1. As an extension of a Flash Flood Warning, when widespread large scale flooding will continue beyond the 6 hours of the original Flash Flood Warning, as a result of recent heavy rainfall. This is known as an **Area Flood Warning**.
2. Issued when a river gauge has exceeded, or is forecast to exceed, a pre-determined flood stage.

Flash Flood Statement

Issued for follow-up information on existing Flash Flood Warnings. It can contain information on reported rainfall, radar estimates of rain, and forecast amounts of rain in the future

Flood Statement

Issued for follow-up information on existing Flood Warnings, either for Area Flood Warnings or Flood Warnings issued for river gauges that have exceeded flood stage.

Winter Season Watches, Advisories & Warnings

Winter Storm Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of a hazardous winter weather event which has the potential to threaten life or property in the next 12 to 48 hours.

Blizzard Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of blizzard conditions in the next 12 to 48 hours:

- a. Wind: Sustained wind or frequent gusts of 35 mph or higher
- b. Visibility: 1/4 mile or less with falling snow OR blowing snow
- c. Time: 3 Hours or greater

Wind Chill Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of wind chill values of -25 degrees °F or colder in the next 12 to 48 hours.

Freezing Rain/Drizzle Advisory

Issued for freezing rain when ice accumulations less than 0.25" are expected to cause problems for pedestrians and motorists within the next 24 hours.

Winter Weather Advisory

Issued for a winter weather event in which there is one or more of the following hazards present:

1. Snow accumulations of 2.5 to 5.0 inches
2. Blowing and/or Drifting Snow (*wind gusts usually in the 25-34 mph range*)
3. Sleet (*ice pellets*) accumulations of less than 0.5"
4. Freezing rain (*with less than 0.25" of ice thickness*) mixed with snow and/or sleet

Wind Chill Advisory

Issued when wind chill values will reach -15°F to -24°F within the next 24 hours.

Blizzard Warning

Issued for sustained wind or frequent gusts greater than or equal to 35 mph accompanied by falling and/or blowing snow, frequently reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for three hours or more.

Ice Storm Warning

Issued when a period of freezing rain is expected to produce ice accumulations of 1/4" or greater, or cause significant disruptions to travel or utilities, usually in the next 24 hours.

Winter Storm Warning

Issued for a winter storm in which there is one or more of the following hazards present:

1. Heavy snow accumulations of 6.0 inches or greater within 12 hours, or a prolonged snowfall of 8.0 inches or greater in 24 hours.
2. Heavy sleet (*ice pellets*) accumulations of 0.5" or greater
3. Freezing rain mixed with heavy snow and/or heavy sleet

Wind Chill Warning

Issued when wind chill values will reach -25°F or colder usually in the next 24 hours.

Non-Precipitation Watches, Advisories & Warnings

High Wind Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for a widespread storm system to produce sustained wind of 40 mph or higher for at least one hour and/or wind gusts (not from thunderstorms) around 60 mph or higher which may cause damage to trees, limbs, power lines and some structures in the next 12 to 48 hours.

Excessive Heat Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event for at least two consecutive days in the next 24 to 72 hours.

Freeze Watch

Issued when conditions are favorable for widespread temperatures at or below freezing during the local growing season.

Fire Weather Watch

Issued when dry vegetation and conditions favoring extreme fire danger are expected 12 to 72 hours in the future.

Wind Advisory

Issued when sustained winds of 30 to 39 mph are expected for 1 hour or longer, OR for wind gusts of 45 to 60 mph for any duration within the next 12 to 36 hours.

Heat Advisory

Issued when maximum daytime heat index values are expected to reach or exceed 105°F.

Frost Advisory

Issued when nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to range from 33°F to 36°F in the local growing season, resulting in the development of widespread frost.

Dense Fog Advisory

Issued when widespread fog is expected to reduce visibilities to 1/4 mile or less, causing a hazard to motorists.

Freezing Fog Advisory

Issued when light fog (*visibility greater than 0.25 mile*) combines with temperatures of 32°F or colder to produce a hazardous formation of ice on roadways and/or bridges (*also known as "Black Ice"*).

High Wind Warning

Issued when sustained winds of 40 mph or more are expected for 1 hour or longer, or for wind gusts (not from thunderstorms) around 60 mph or higher which may cause damage to trees, limbs, power lines and some structures in the next 24 hours.

Excessive Heat Warning

Issued when maximum daytime heat index values are expected to reach or exceed 110°F on at least two consecutive days AND nighttime heat index values of 75°F or higher. An Excessive Heat Warning can also be issued for at least four consecutive days of "Heat Advisory" criteria, since the effects of heat are usually cumulative.

Freeze Warning

Issued when widespread nighttime low temperatures are expected to reach 32°F or lower in the local growing season. They are usually issued to highlight the first few freezes of the fall or unusually late freezes in the spring

Red Flag Warning (*Fire Weather Warning*)

Issued when dry vegetation, sustained winds of 20 mph or higher, and minimum relative humidity drops to 25% or less are all expected within 24 hours, resulting in an extreme fire danger.