

WEATHER LANGUAGE

Common Terms Used in Weather Reports

Advisory - A forecast issued by the National Weather Service to highlight conditions that require caution, but are not thought to be immediately life threatening.

Backing Wind - A wind that changes its direction in a counter clockwise motion. For example, a northwest wind changing to a west wind.

Cumulonimbus - A dense and vertically developed cloud that produces thunderstorms. The cloud can bring heavy showers, hail, lightning, high winds and sometimes tornadoes.

Cumulus Clouds - Fluffy, mid-level clouds that develop in towering shapes and signal fair weather. Cumulus clouds are a principle cloud type.

Downburst - A strong downward rush of air, which produces a blast of damaging, winds on or close to the surface.

Excessive Heat Warning - It's issued within 12 hours of the onset of the heat conditions listed in the excessive heat watch.

Excessive Heat Watch - It's issued when the following conditions occur within 12-36 hours: a heat index of at least 105 degrees for more than 3 hours per day for 2 consecutive days or a heat index more than 115 degrees for any period of time.

Funnel Cloud - A tornado that doesn't reach the ground. It has a rotating cone-shaped column of air extending downward from the base of a cumulonimbus or thunderstorm cloud, but whose circulation does not make contact with the ground.

Gustnado - It's just a gust front tornado. It's a small and weak tornado that occurs along the gust front of a thunderstorm and doesn't stay on the ground for long periods of time.

High Wind Warning - It's issued when winds of 40 mph or greater are occurring or expected to occur for at least one hour. It also occurs if winds of 58 mph or greater are expected.

Macroburst - A large downdraft of air with an outflow diameter of 2.5 miles or greater and

damaging winds lasting from 5 to 20 minutes. This may reach tornado intensity.

Microburst - A small downdraft of air with an outflow diameter of less than 2.5 miles with the peak winds lasting from 2 to 5 minutes. This can effect a planes performance.

Saffir-Simpson Scale - A hurricane intensity scale that relates hurricane damage to wind speeds and central air pressures.

- Category 1: wind speeds 74-95 m.p.h.
- Category 2: wind speeds 96-110 m.p.h.
- Category 3: wind speeds 111-130 m.p.h.
- Category 4: wind speeds 131-155 m.p.h.
- Category 5: wind speeds over 155 m.p.h.

Severe Thunderstorm - A thunderstorm with winds of 58 mph or greater and/or with hail $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter or larger.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning - It's issued to warn the public, emergency management, and other cooperating agencies when a severe thunderstorm is forecast to occur or is occurring. The warning will include where the storm was occurring, its direction of movement and the primary threat from the storm.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch - It's issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms.

Supercell - A severe thunderstorm whose updrafts and downdrafts are in near balance for several hours. Supercells often produce large hail and tornadoes.

Tornado - It begins as a funnel cloud with spinning columns of air that drop down from a severe thunderstorm. When they reach the ground they become tornadoes. Tornadoes are between 300 and 2,000 feet wide and travel at speeds of 20 to 45 miles per hour. They usually only last a few minutes, but their spinning winds, up to 300 miles per hour, can lift houses into the air and rip trees from the ground.

Tornado Warning - It's issued to warn the public, emergency management, and other cooperating agencies when a tornado is forecast to occur or is occurring. The warning will include where the storm was occurring and where it's expected to travel.

Tornado Watch - It's issued when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes.