

## Severe Weather:

What is the differences between watches and warnings?

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Watches</h3> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conditions are favorable or expected but not occurring or imminent</b></p>	
<b>Tornado</b>	Atmospheric conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes.
<b>Severe Thunderstorm</b>	Atmospheric conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms (i.e. producing hail at least 1 inch in diameter and/or 50 knots (48 mph) or greater wind speeds). Lightning is not a criteria for a severe thunderstorm warning. Heavy rain is not either.
<b>Flood Watch</b>	A high flow or overflow of water from a river <b>is possible</b> in the given time period. It can also apply to heavy runoff or drainage of water into low-lying areas. These watches are generally issued for flooding that is expected to occur at least 6 hours after heavy rains have ended.
<b>Flash Flood Watch</b>	A flash flooding <b>is possible</b> in or close to the watch area. Flash Flood Watches are generally issued for flooding that is expected to occur within 6 hours after heavy rains have ended.
<b>Coastal Flood Watch</b>	The <b>possibility</b> exists for the inundation of land areas along the coast within the next 12 to 36 hours.
<b>Winter Weather Advisory</b>	Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.
<b>Winter Weather Watch</b>	A watch is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazardous weather event to occur. NWS issues a Winter Storm Watch when conditions are favorable for dangerous winter weather. It does not mean the weather will occur, but it is possible and you should start making preparations such as checking on isolated family members or friends, bringing in firewood, etc.
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Warnings</h3> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conditions are occurring or imminent</b></p>	
<b>Tornado</b>	A severe thunderstorm has developed and has either produced a tornado or radar has indicated intense low level rotation in the presence of atmospheric conditions conducive to tornado development.
<b>Severe Thunderstorm</b>	A severe thunderstorm has developed, capable of producing hail greater than 1 inch in diameter and/or 50 knot (58 mph) wind speeds.
<b>Flood Warning</b>	Flooding is <b>actually occurring or is imminent</b> in the warning area
<b>Flash Flood Warning</b>	Flash flooding is <b>actually occurring or is imminent</b> in the warning area. It can be issued as a result of torrential rains, a dam failure, or ice jam.
<b>Coastal Flood Warning</b>	Land areas along the coast are <b>expected</b> to become, or have become, inundated by sea water above the typical tide action.
<b>Winter Weather Warning</b>	A warning is issued when a winter storm is imminent or occurring. If you hear a warning, immediately go home or shelter in place until it is safe to travel again. If you are home, bring in pets and plan to stay inside until you are told it is safe to go out again. Blizzards, extreme cold and windchill can quickly become deadly outside.
<h3>Key Terms:</h3>	

<b>Freezing Rain</b>	Rain that freezes when it hits the ground; creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.
<b>Sleet</b>	Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.
<b>Wind Chill</b>	A measure of how cold people feel due to the combined effect of wind and cold temperatures; the Wind Chill Index is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin. Both cold temperatures and wind remove heat from the body; as the wind speed increases during cold conditions, a body loses heat more quickly. Eventually, the internal body temperature also falls and hypothermia can develop. Animals also feel the effects of wind chill; but inanimate objects, such as vehicles and buildings, do not. They will only cool to the actual air temperature, although much faster during windy conditions.

National Weather Service (<http://www.weather.gov/safety>)