

## How to Report Severe Weather

There are several options available when it comes to reporting severe weather to the National Weather Service Office in Birmingham, AL. Whether you are on the road, at home, or in your office, there is a quick and easy way to get your report to us.

- Call your local Emergency Management Office
- Call local law enforcement/ 911 Service
- Go to [www.weather.gov/bmx/](http://www.weather.gov/bmx/) and click on "Submit Storm Report" in the left-hand menu
- Post it on our Facebook wall. Search for **NWSBirmingham**, and like us! 
- Twitter: [@NWSBirmingham](https://twitter.com/NWSBirmingham)  
Include [#bmxwx](https://twitter.com/hashtag/bmxwx) and/or [#alwx](https://twitter.com/hashtag/alwx) 
- Email: [SR-BMX.StormReports@noaa.gov](mailto:SR-BMX.StormReports@noaa.gov)
- You may also send any damage or severe weather photos to the following email address: [SR-BMX.pix@noaa.gov](mailto:SR-BMX.pix@noaa.gov)

A major contribution to the success of our severe weather warning program is the receipt of storm reports from all our customers and partners across Central Alabama.



## Additional Information

### Damage Paths

#### Tornado

- Convergence
- Narrow, well-defined track
- Rotation about a vertical axis



#### Downburst

- Divergence
- Broad, diffuse track
- No rotation on a horizontal axis



### Enhanced Fujita Scale (EF Scale)

The National Weather Service uses the Enhanced Fujita Scale to classify tornadoes based on their intensity. Tornadoes are rated EF-0 to EF5 according to their maximum estimated wind

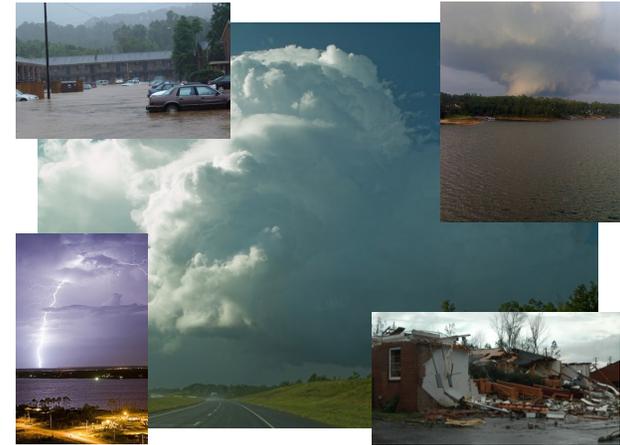
| EF Number | 3 Second Gust (mph) |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 0         | 65-85               |
| 1         | 86-110              |
| 2         | 111-135             |
| 3         | 136-165             |
| 4         | 166-200             |
| 5         | Over 200            |

**REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST! PLEASE, DO NOT PUT YOURSELF OR ANYONE ELSE IN DANGER JUST TO GATHER STORM INFORMATION. STAY IN YOUR SAFE PLACE DURING POTENTIALLY SEVERE WEATHER.**



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Phone: 205-664-3010 Fax: 205-664-7821  
[www.weather.gov/bmx](http://www.weather.gov/bmx)

## National Weather Service



## Local Storm Reports: How and What to Report

The National Weather Service in Birmingham Needs **YOUR** Help!



Department of Commerce



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service

# What Should Be Reported?

When reporting severe weather, the National Weather Service needs as much detail in the information as possible. Here is a quick list of the pertinent information to pass along to us:

- **LOCATION** of the severe weather event
  - Reference to the nearest town, major cross streets, address
  - GPS coordinates if available
- **TIME** of the weather event and/or the report
  - Not necessarily the current time, unless the event is ongoing
- **DESCRIPTION** of the weather event
  - Tornado/funnel cloud
  - Rotating wall cloud
  - Flash flooding
  - Damaging winds (  $\geq 60$  mph)
  - Large hail ( 1 inch or larger)
  - Persistent non-rotating wall cloud
  - Heavy rainfall ( 1 inch per hour or more)
  - Small hail (  $\leq \frac{3}{4}$  inch)
  - Strong winds (  $< 60$  mph)
  - Other cloud structures



The higher up on this list, the more urgent it is to submit your report.

## Winds/Hail

Measured and/or estimated wind speeds should be reported whether damage is caused or not. Below is a chart that may help you estimate wind speeds if you do not have a measuring instrument on hand.

| Wind Speed (mph) | Effects   |
|------------------|---|
| 25-31            | Large tree branches in motion; whistling in power lines; umbrella use becomes difficult |
| 32-38            | Whole trees in motion; difficult to walk against the wind                               |
| 39-46            | Twigs broken; cars veer on road   |
| 47-54            | Light structure damage  |
| 55-63            | Trees uprooted; considerable structure damage   |
| 64+              | Widespread structure damage   |

Hail should also be reported to the national Weather Service regardless of the size. Pea size hail reports are just as welcomed and appreciated as those of baseball size. Hail size can be measured with a ruler or some other type of device, but it can also be estimated by comparing it to certain everyday objects.

**Hail:**

- 0.75" - Penny
- 0.88" - Nickel
- 1.00" - Quarter
- 1.25" - Half Dollar
- 1.50" - Ping Pong Ball
- 1.75" - Golf Ball
- 2.50" - Tennis Ball
- 2.75" - Baseball
- 4.00" - Grapefruit
- 4.50" - Softball

When reporting strong/damaging winds or hail, please be specific as to whether the wind speed or size is measured or estimated. If reporting wind damage, try to be as detailed as possible when describing the type and extent of the damage.

## Flash Flooding

The following criteria have been established to define flash flooding in Central Alabama:

- 1) Flooding is imminent or likely to occur that will produce a significant threat to life and property; i.e., home and/or businesses are likely to be flooded, and/or roadways closed, barricaded, or washed out
- 2) Six inches of fast-flowing water across a maintained county, state, or federal roadway is expected



Reports of heavy rainfall are also welcomed at NWS Birmingham. If you have a rain gauge, please feel free to call in your measured rainfall accumulations during heavy rain events.

## Lightning

The National Weather Service does not issue warnings for lightning because all thunderstorms contain lightning. However, please report any injuries/deaths related to lightning. We also appreciate any reports of lightning strikes to homes and other structures that result in fires.

