



Storm Reports using Social Media

Show me the weather!





Twitter - @NWSMKX



Follow us!

twitter.com/nwsmkx





Facebook



- Like us on Facebook too!!



- [US.NationalWeatherService.Milwaukee.gov](https://www.facebook.com/USNationalWeatherService.Milwaukee.gov)

A screenshot of a Facebook post. The top part of the post is a photograph of a lake surrounded by trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow under a clear blue sky. In the bottom left corner of the post, there is a circular logo for the National Weather Service, featuring a lightning bolt and the text "NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE". To the right of the logo, the text reads "US National Weather Service Milwaukee/Sullivan Wisconsin". Below this text are two buttons: "Update Page Info" and "Like". At the bottom of the post, it says "7,177 likes · 1,370 talking about this".

 **US National Weather Service**
Milwaukee/Sullivan
Wisconsin

[Update Page Info](#) [Like](#)

7,177 likes · 1,370 talking about this



Why do we need spotters?



- Spotter reports become part of a national publication called “Storm Data” which serves as an official source of historical weather events
- Ground truth information is what gets public attention
 - *You may save lives!*
 - *You may be the reason a warning is issued!*



What do you report?

Time, Location, Conditions! - TLC

- **Snowfall/Rainfall**
- **Freezing Rain/Sleet**
- **Flooding**
- **Hail stones**
- **Thunderstorm wind damage/gusts**
- **Rotating wall clouds**
- **Funnel clouds**
- **Tornadoes/Waterspouts**



Snowfall



- **Snowfall**: Record snowfall to the nearest tenth of an inch e.g. 1.2”
 - *Avoid measuring next to buildings*
 - *If possible, measure in different locations and find the average*
 - Especially if there is blowing/drifting snow
 - *Snow depth or new snowfall?*
 - Snow depth: Total amount of snow on ground
 - New snowfall: Amount fallen since last measurement or snow began to fall
 - Measured every 6 hours
 - Clear snow collecting area for next measurement

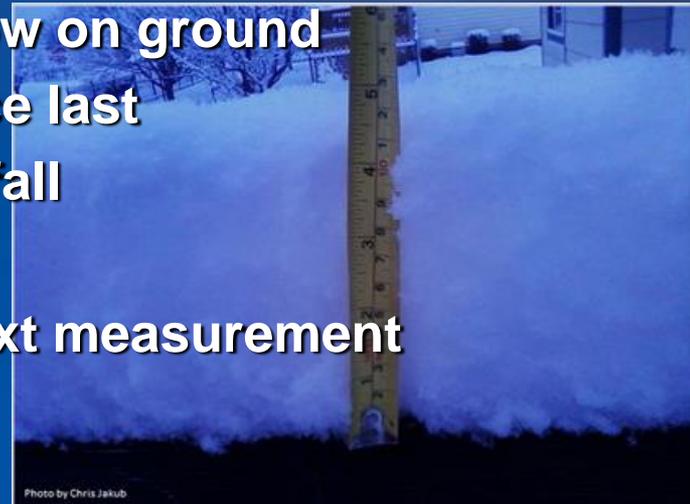


Photo by Chris Jakub



Rainfall



- Rainfall: Record rainfall to the nearest one hundredth of an inch e.g. 0.01”
 - *Use a rain gauge!*
 - *What time frame is the measurement for?*
 - 6 hours? 24 hours?





Freezing Rain/Sleet



- **Freezing Rain**: Always report, regardless of accumulation!
 - *Record ice accumulations to the nearest tenth of an inch i.e. 0.1”*
 - *Report any damage to trees or power lines*
- **Sleet**: Resembles small hailstones
 - *Record sleet the same way as snowfall*





Flooding



- **Flash Floods**: A flood occurring less than 6 hours after heavy rainfall or causative event (e.g. a dam break)
- Rainfall measurements of 1+ inches in an hour → heavy rainfall
- Is there water over the curb or covering the street?
- Is the water stationary or moving?
- Does the water appear deep? i.e. more than 2 ft?



Photo by Melody Bergdahl - Near Lindsey, WI - Sept 23, 2010



Hail stones



- **Hail**: Report hail of any size! Hail ≥ 1 inch generate Severe Thunderstorm Warnings
 - *Use a coin or ball as a reference size*
 - *How long did the hail last? (30 sec? 5 min?)*

Hailstone Size	Measurement
Pea	1/4"
Marble	1/2"
Dime	7/10"
Penny	3/4"
Nickel	7/8"
Quarter	1"
Half dollar	1 1/4"
Golf ball	1 3/4"





Thunderstorm Wind Gusts



- T-Storm Wind Gusts: 40 mph or higher. Gusts ≥ 58 mph requires Severe Thunderstorm Warnings
- Estimate the wind speeds
 - *Is there damage? Where?*



Estimated Wind Speed	Visual Cues
25-31 mph	Large branches in motion
32-38 mph	Whole trees in motion
39-54 mph	Twigs break off, hinders walking
55-72 mph	Large branches broken, damage to chimneys/TV antennas
73-112 mph	Removes shingles, trees uprooted, windows broken
133+ mph	Roofs torn off, weak buildings destroyed, large trees uprooted



Rotating Wall Clouds



- Rotating Wall Clouds: isolated cloud lowering attached to a rain free base
 - *Often exhibit slow, persistent rotation*
 - *Appear on the backside of potentially tornadic thunderstorms, often precede tornadoes*
 - *Change shape, size, and color with time, usually $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles wide*
 - *Estimate where it is located in regards to storm*





Funnel Clouds



- **Funnel Clouds**: Do not come in contact with the ground or create debris!
 - *They are always rotating*
 - Caution: Scud clouds often resemble funnel clouds, make sure the rotation is persistent!
 - *Often found in or near a wall cloud*





Tornadoes

- **Tornadoes**: violently rotating column of air extending from base of a convective cloud to the ground
 - *Look for rotating dirt/debris at ground level to confirm a tornado*
 - What direction is it moving? Estimate its current location
 - *Tornadoes don't touch down, they spin up below cloud base, do not need a condensation funnel for a tornado!*





Waterspouts

- **Waterspouts**: There are 2 types:
tornadic and fair weather
 - *Fair weather are more common and do not move on land*
 - *Tornadic usually come from the land and a tornadic thunderstorm*
 - *More frequent in Aug, Sept, and Oct when lake waters are warm and air is cooler*
 - *Note the direction it is moving!*





How to tweet your report?



**Tweet @NWSMKX using
#swiwx**

(southern Wisconsin Weather)

- **Make sure you include:**
 - Time, Location, and Conditions - TLC
- **Remember, safety comes first! Make sure you are safe before reporting!**



More Example Tweets



- **Winter Weather:**

@nwsmkx 715AM Barneveld Iowa cnty M1.3 in. snow. Blowing snow vsby 1/2mi. #swiwx

@nwsmkx 915AM Fond du Lac E6.0 in. snow. Still heavy snow vsby 1/8mi #swiwx

@nwsmkx 1020AM West Bend Washington cnty M0.05in ice. Still freezing rain. #swiwx



More Example Tweets



- **Severe Weather:**

**@nwsmkx 714PM Brookfield Waukesha cnty 1” Hail
#swiwx**

**@nwsmkx 820PM 2NW Wales Waukesha cnty
TORNADO movg E #swiwx**

**@nwsmkx 910PM Madison Dane cnty M65mph wind
gust #swiwx**

**@nwsmkx 1035 PM Jefferson Heavy rain, M1.50
#swiwx**



Common WX Abbreviations



- **Light – lgt**
- **Moderate – mdt**
- **Heavy – hvy**
- **Miles – mi**
- **Thunderstorm – tstorm**
- **Tornado – TORNADO (use all caps...this is OK to scream)**
- **Visibility - vsby**



Common WX Abbreviations



- Moving – Movg
- North – N
- South – S
- East – E
- West – W
- Southwest – SW
- Southeast – SE
- Northeast – NE
- Northwest – NW



Tidbits



- Remember, you have 140 characters to work with.
- Abbreviate where you can to still convey a succinct report.
- Add county only when city is different than the county name.
- Use #swiwx ONLY if you have room. We will still see it either way!!



Social Media Sites



- Find us on Twitter...

@nwsmkx

- Find us on Facebook...

US.NationalWeatherService.Milwaukee.gov