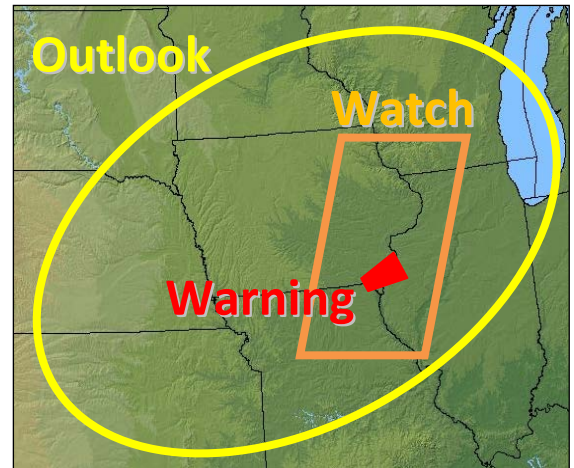# Watches and Warnings

Outlooks

An **OUTLOOK** is a forecast that outlines any significant weather expected. The Hazardous Weather Outlook emphasizes any significant weather expected during the next 24 hours, but also includes an overview through 7 days. Initially developed for use by law enforcement, spotter groups, emergency managers, schools, and other decision-makers, the Hazardous Weather Outlook can be helpful to anyone when they are trying to plan their day. The Hazardous Weather Outlook is issued daily in the early morning and updated if conditions change.

Watches

A **WATCH** is issued to give advance notice when conditions are favorable for the development of severe weather, whether it is severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, or flash flooding. Typically a Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch is issued within 2-6 hours of the storm and covers an area about the size of a state. When a watch is issued, it is time to *take precautions* and *make sure you are prepared.*

Did you know…

In the US, Tornado Warnings are issued an average of 11 minutes before the tornado touches down.

Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are issued an average of 20 minutes before the severe weather occurs.

Warnings

A **WARNING** is issued when life-threatening weather is occurring or imminent. When a warning is issued for your area, you should *take action immediately to protect your life and your property*. A Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued for storms with hail 1-inch (quarter size) or larger and/or 58 mph winds. A Tornado Warning is issued when radar indicates that a tornado is likely and/or when trained storm spotters report a tornado.

Severe Thunderstorm, Tornado, and Flash Flood Warnings are issued for areas about the size of a county but are "storm-based". This means that the area covered by the warning is the area threatened by a specific storm.

The Bottom Line:
WATCH: Tells you that severe weather is possible. Be ready.
WARNING: Life-threatening weather is imminent. Act now!

On the web:

National Weather Service.. www.weather.gov
Red Cross Preparedness .... www.redcross.org