

**Chicago**

# Spotter Reference Sheet

**What to Report:**

- **Tornado** (must see debris beneath funnel!)
- **Funnel Cloud** (must be rotating!)
- **Wall Clouds that meet the following criteria:**
  - ✓ Rapid, obvious rotation
  - ✓ Upward motion
  - ✓ Warm inflow
- **Wind Damage**, including:
  - ✓ Snapped or uprooted trees
  - ✓ Branches, including diameter
  - ✓ Damaged/downed power poles
  - ✓ Structural damage
- **Measured Wind Gusts** (45 mph or higher):
  - ✓ If you have a home weather station
- **Hail** (all sizes, see chart below for guide)
- **Flash Flooding and Flooding:**
  - ✓ Flash Flooding: Notify us immediately
  - ✓ Flooding: Notify us when convenient

**How to Report****Remember the *Four W's* of a good spotter report:**

- ✓ **Who** you are
- ✓ **Where** you are
- ✓ **When** it occurred
- ✓ **What** weather/damage was observed

**How to make a report:**

Spotter phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please only use this number for reporting severe weather!***Web:** [www.weather.gov/crh/stormreports?sid=lot](http://www.weather.gov/crh/stormreports?sid=lot)**Web form:** <https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report/>**Email:** [nws.chicago@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.chicago@noaa.gov)**Facebook:** US National Weather Service Chicago IL  
**X:** [@NWSChicago](https://www.x.com/@NWSChicago)**Hail Size Chart:**

Pea	0.25"	<b>Golf Ball (Considerable)</b>	<b>1.75"</b>
Dime	0.50"	Egg	2.00"
Penny	0.75"	Billiard Ball	2.25"
Nickel	0.88"	Tennis Ball	2.50"
<b>Quarter (Severe Criteria)</b>	<b>1.00"</b>	<b>Baseball (Destructive)</b>	<b>2.75"</b>
Half Dollar	1.25"	Softball	3.75 to 4.00"
Walnut/Ping Pong Ball	1.50"	Grapefruit	4.75"

Wind Damage Category	Typical Damage
<b>Sub-Severe</b>	Broken twigs and tree branches <3" in diameter, intermittent leaf litter on roadways and yards, trash cans and lawn decorations blown around.
<b>Severe</b>	Healthy tree branches 3 to 6" in diameter broken or snapped, widespread leaf litter on roadways and yards, downed fence sections.
<b>Considerable Severe</b>	Healthy trees uprooted, healthy tree branches 6 to 12" in diameter broken or snapped, soffit or shingle damage, outdoor shed or barn roof damage.
<b>Destructive Severe</b>	Healthy trees uprooted or snapped, healthy tree branches >12" in diameter snapped, collapsed barns or sheds, siding ripped off homes, structural roof damage.

Flash Flooding	Flooding
Rapid onset of water, such as flooding of basements, roadways, and retention ponds after thunderstorms.	Gradual onset of water, such as rises in river and creek levels after multiple days of rainfall.

**Helpful links and bookmarks:**

- [Spc.noaa.gov](http://Spc.noaa.gov) (Outlooks, Mesoscale Discussions, Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado Watches)
- [Weather.gov/Chicago](http://Weather.gov/Chicago) (Graphical forecasts, Hazardous Weather Outlook, Area Forecast Discussion)
- **Spotter Certificate:** [weather.gov/media/lot/spotter/weather\\_certificate.pdf](http://weather.gov/media/lot/spotter/weather_certificate.pdf)

**Watch:** Be ready. The ingredients are present for severe weather. (Typical duration of 3 to 5 hours over a large area)**Warning:** Take Action. Severe weather is moving into your area. (Typical duration of 30 to 60 minutes for 1 to 3 counties).**Being a storm spotter does not make you invincible!**

Make safe decisions, spot from safe distances, and take cover when threatening weather approaches.