

**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

Web form: <https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report/>

Email: nws.chicago@noaa.gov

Facebook: US National Weather Service Chicago IL
X: @NWSChicago

Hail Size Chart:

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

| Wind Damage Category | Typical Damage |
|----------------------------|---|
| Sub-Severe | Broken twigs and tree branches <3" in diameter, intermittent leaf litter on roadways and yards, trash cans and lawn decorations blown around. |
| Severe | Healthy tree branches 3 to 6" in diameter broken or snapped, widespread leaf litter on roadways and yards, downed fence sections. |
| Considerable Severe | Healthy trees uprooted, healthy tree branches 6 to 12" in diameter broken or snapped, soffit or shingle damage, outdoor shed or barn roof damage. |
| Destructive Severe | 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** (Outlooks, Mesoscale Discussions, Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado Watches)
- **Weather.gov/Chicago** (Graphical forecasts, Hazardous Weather Outlook, Area Forecast Discussion)
- **Spotter Certificate:** 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.