

SEVERE WEATHER IDENTIFICATION GUIDELINES

The National Weather Service has defined a severe thunderstorm as one that produces 1) hail 3/4 of an inch in diameter or larger; 2) winds at or above 58 MPH (50 knots); and/or 3) a tornado. When attempting to verify warnings, the National Weather Service looks for these occurrences, in addition to other events that imply a severe thunderstorm, such as damage.

Use the following criteria when determining whether you are dealing with an actual severe weather event. REMEMBER, your severe weather reports are **vital** to the NWS, hours or days after an event has occurred. Include the time and the exact location of the event when reporting.

THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED TO BE SEVERE EVENTS AND SHOULD BE REPORTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

TORNADO

1. A credible report of a tornado on the ground. If the funnel extends more than halfway from cloud base to the ground, or if dirt/debris are seen on the ground underneath the funnel, it should be reported as a tornado.

DAMAGING WINDS

1. Measured thunderstorm wind gusts of 58 MPH (50 knots) or more
2. Estimated thunderstorm wind gusts of 58 MPH (50 knots) or more from trained spotter
3. Trees blown down or uprooted (more than 1)
4. Large limbs or branches blown down (more than 1)
5. Power lines blown down
6. Permanent signs blown down
7. Roof damage from the wind (*large* area of roofing material removed)
8. Windows broken by the wind
9. Structural damage to business, house, barn, shed > circus tent, etc
10. Radio tower or large antenna blown down
11. Home TV antennas blown down (more than 1)
12. Campers heavily damaged or destroyed
13. Mobile home damaged by wind

HAIL

1. Hail 3/4 of an inch in diameter or larger (penny size or larger)
2. Windows or windshields broken by hail
4. Roofs or house siding damaged by hail

If you are in **doubt** as to whether an event/damage is severe or not, **make the report anyway!**