



Basic SKYWARN Spotter Principles



Scott Unger NWS Nashville Lead Meteorologist



@NWSNashville



US National Weather Service Nashville



Outline



- About the National Weather Service
- Middle TN Severe Weather Climatology
- NWS Products
- Weather Safety Rules
- Thunderstorm Basics and Storms Features
- Reporting Severe Weather
- Questions and Advertisements



Who Are We?



Department of Commerce

NOAA

National Weather Service

NESDIS

NOAA Research

Ocean Service

Fisheries

Marine and Aviation Operations

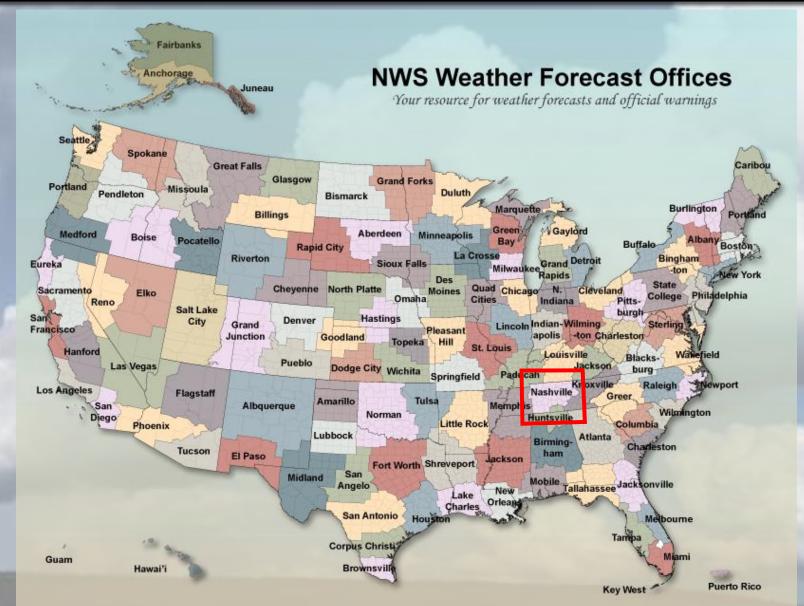




The National Weather Service



- 122 Local Weather Forecast Offices
- About 4800 employees
- National and Region Centers:
 - Storm Prediction Center
 - National Hurricane Center
 - Climate Prediction Center
 - National Water Center
 - River Forecast Centers
 - Center Weather Service Units





NWS Nashville County Warning Area 🕠







Local NWS Operations





8-12 people on duty Monday – Friday 2-3 meteorologists on the weekend and overnight OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 365 DAYS A YEAR



Local NWS Operations



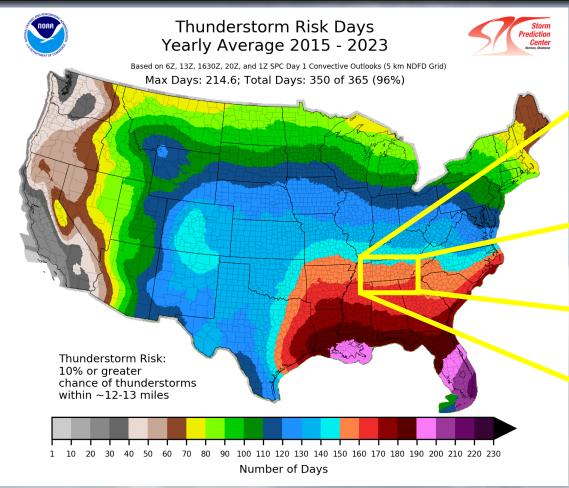
What do we do?

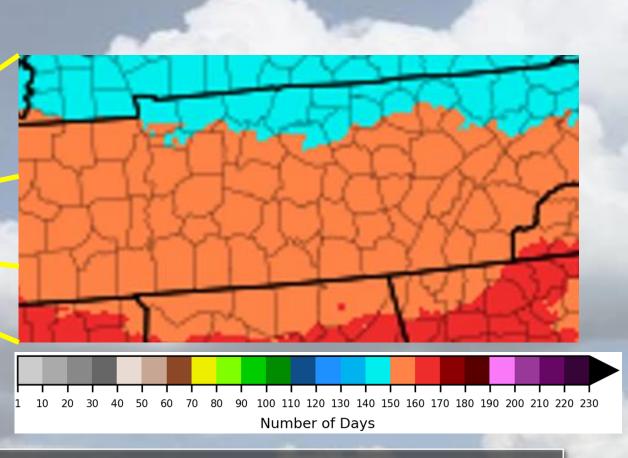
- Issue local forecasts and warnings
- Sole entity responsible for issuing watches, warnings, and advisories
- Create aviation forecasts for FAA, airports, airlines, private pilots, etc.
- Maintain internal and external equipment
- Conduct community outreach
- Provide expert advice to emergency operations centers (DSS)
- Train volunteer observers and public









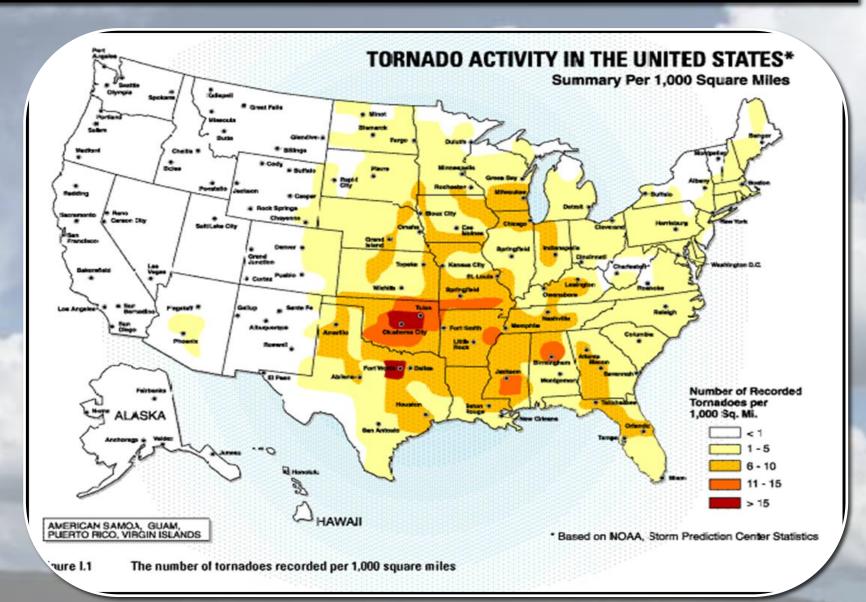


Middle TN has 140-160 days with thunderstorm risks every year!





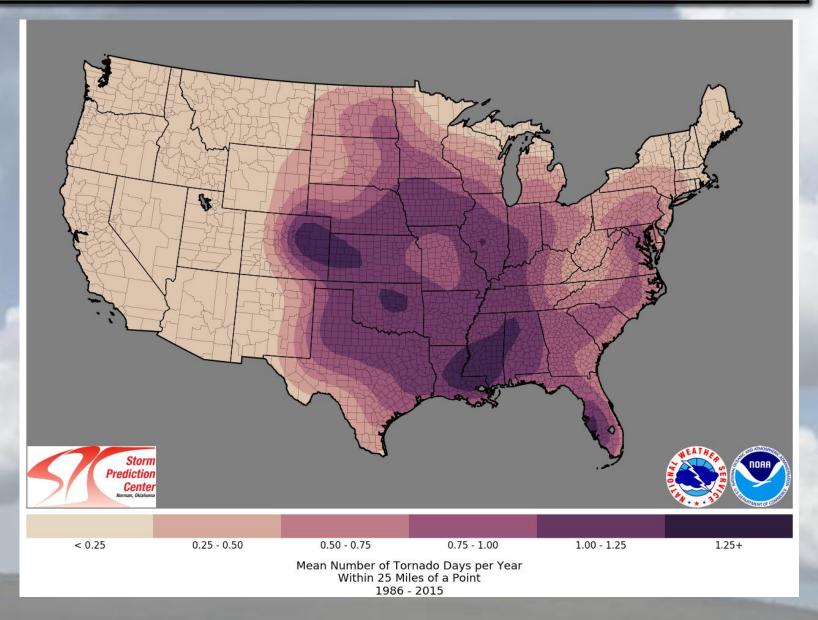
What do you think of when you hear "Tornado Alley"?







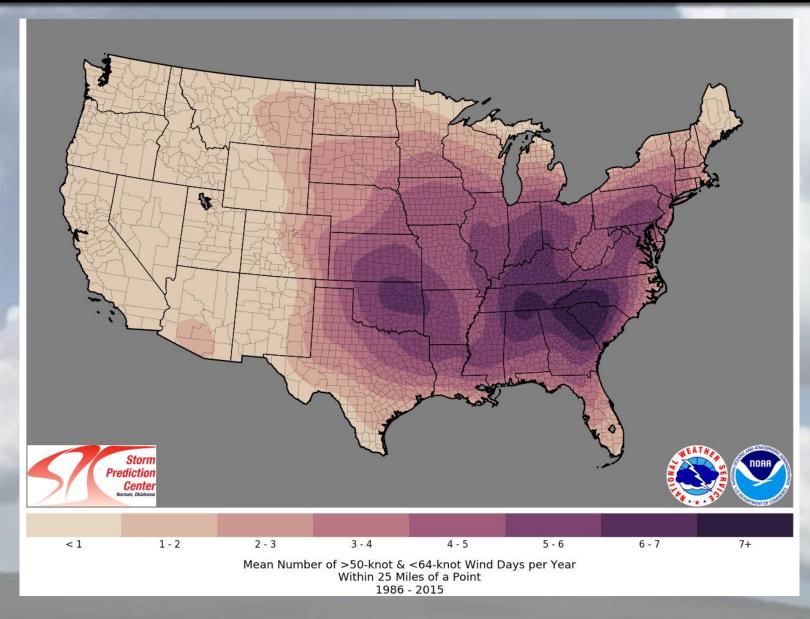
But where is the real "tornado alley"?





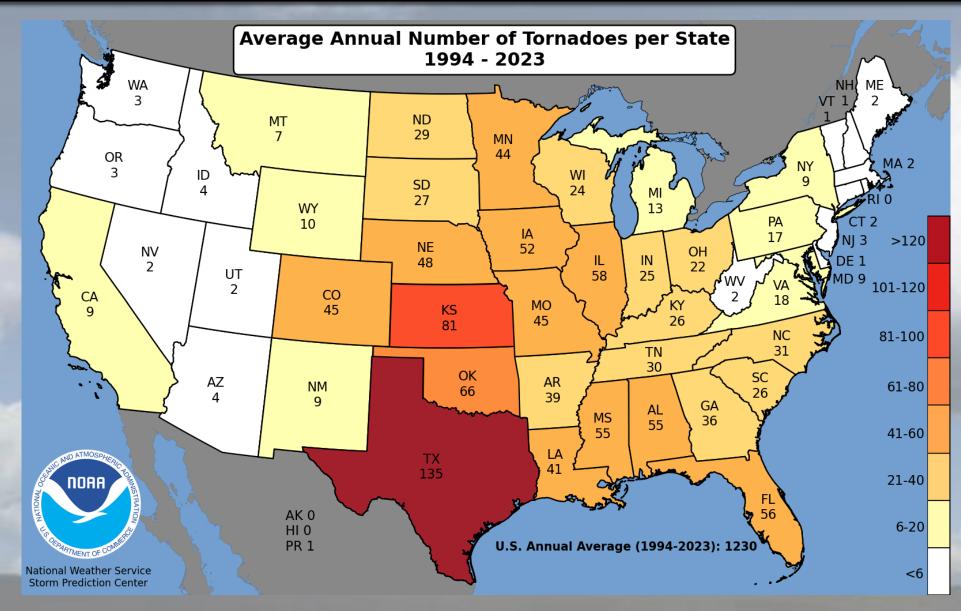


How about damaging winds?



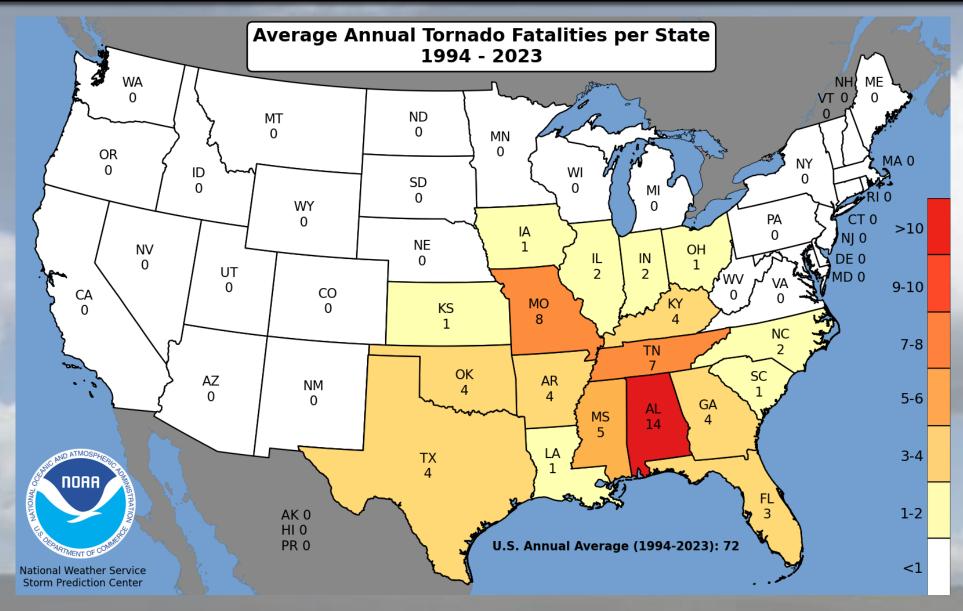






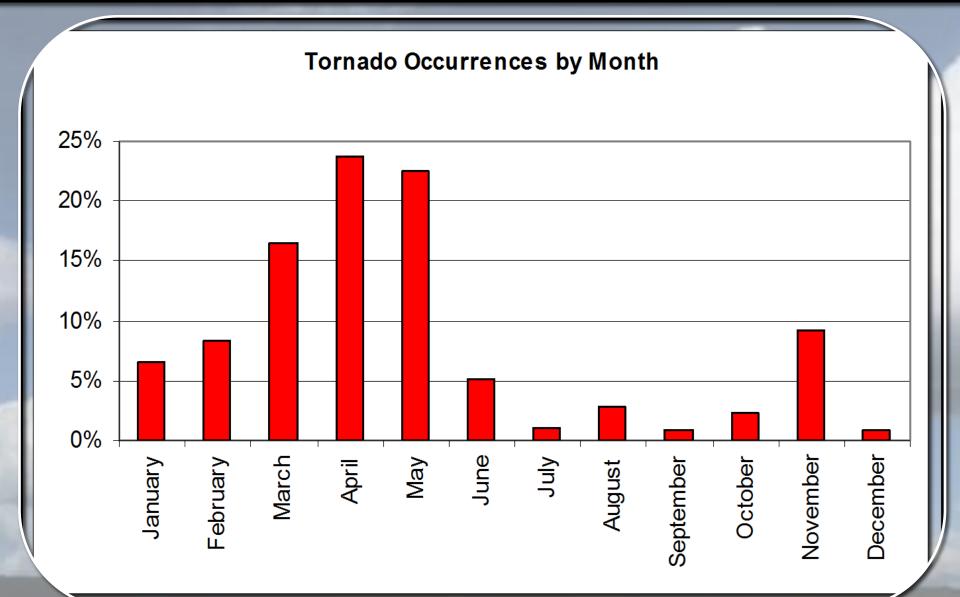






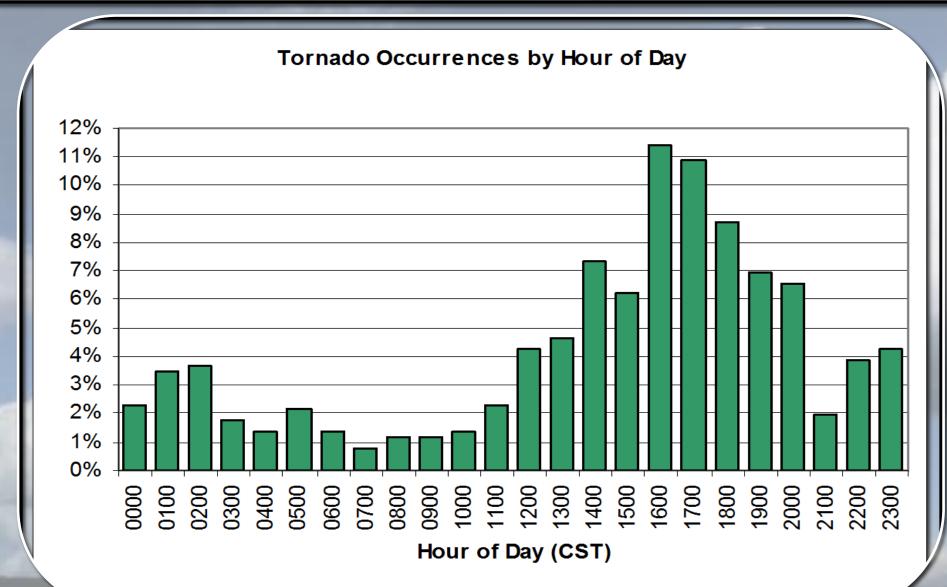






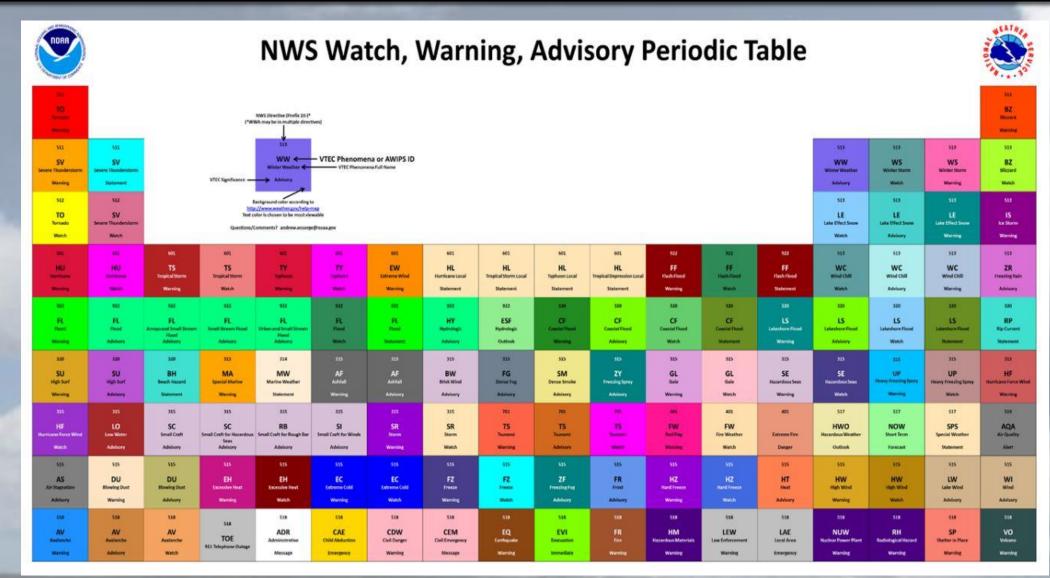
















DISCUSSION

DAY 3 CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK NWS STORM PREDICTION CENTER NORMAN OK 0227 AM CDT WED JUN 27 2012

VALID 291200Z - 301200Z

..OH VALLEY/CNTRL APPALACHIAN MTNS/MID-ATLANTIC... ANY STORM THAT CAN DEVELOP IN SPITE OF THESE LIMITING FACTORS COULD HAVE AN ISOLATED SEVERE THREAT LATE FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

OUTLOOK



WATCH



WARNING



ACTION: ask yourself if the forecast mentions possible hazardous weather in your area

ACTION: review your severe weather preparedness plans and monitor the forecast

ACTION: listen for warnings and be prepared to take action if a warning is issued



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__) *1 to 3 DAYS* [









Watches

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm/Flash Flood

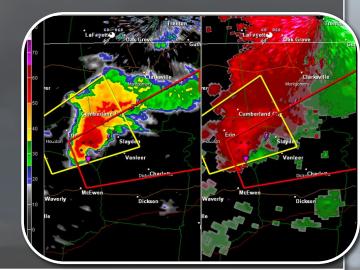
- Conditions are favorable
- Usually last 3 to 6 hours
- Watch the sky, be sure your NOAA Weather Radio is plugged in with fresh batteries



Warnings

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm/Flash Flood

- Conditions are occurring or about to occur
- Issued by local NWS office, last 30-60 minutes
- Take Shelter if you go under a warning!







What is a Special Weather Statement (for strong storms)?

A thunderstorm that contains one or more of the following:

- Large amounts of cloud to ground lightning
- Winds of 30-58 mph
- Hail of 0.25" to 0.88" in diameter (pea to nickel-size)
- Rotation, but not strong enough to warrant Tornado Warning







Severe Thunderstorm Warning

A severe thunderstorm contains one or more of the following:

Winds of 58 mph or higher

Hail of 1" in diameter or larger

(quarter-size)

Tornado



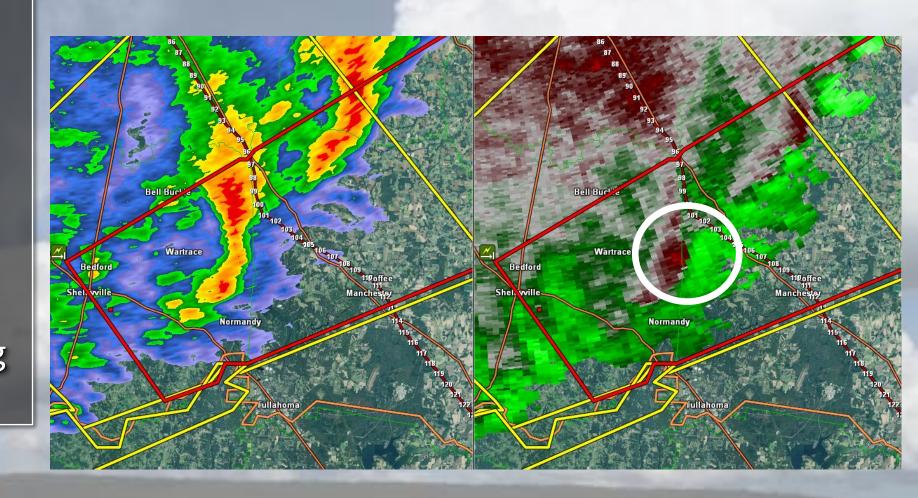


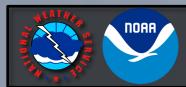




Tornado Warning: Radar Indicated

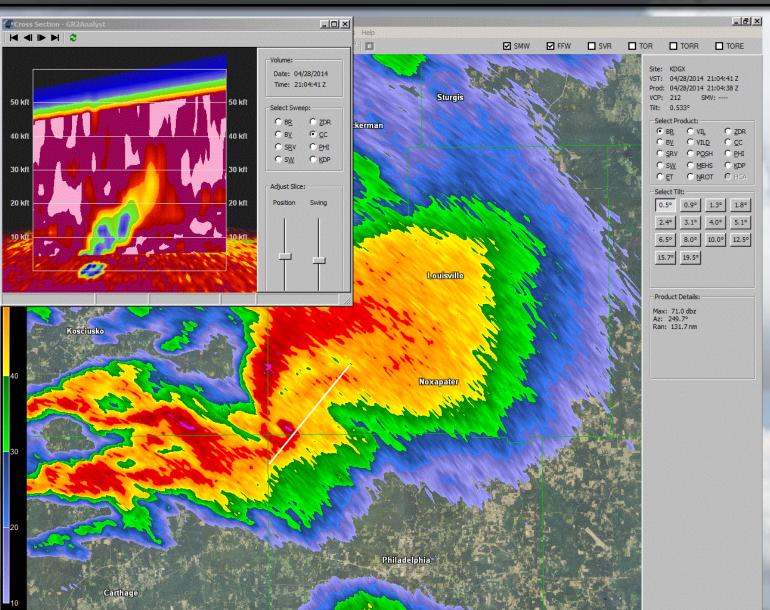
 Tornado is likely to develop or is already occurring







Tornado
Warning:
Radar Confirmed







Considerable-Confident of strong tornado (EF-2 – EF-3)

...A TORNADO WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 645 PM CST FOR EAST CENTRAL PERRY...NORTHWESTERN LEWIS AND SOUTHWESTERN HICKMAN COUNTIES...

AT 629 PM CST...A CONFIRMED LARGE AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS TORNADO WAS LOCATED 8 MILES NORTH OF HOHENWALD...MOVING NORTHEAST AT 70 MPH.

THIS IS A PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS SITUATION.

Catastrophic-Confident of violent tornado (EF-4 – EF-5)

...TORNADO EMERGENCY FOR HOLLY SPRINGS...

...A TORNADO WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 445 PM CST FOR NORTHWESTERN LAFAYETTE...MARSHALL...SOUTHEASTERN TATE AND NORTHEASTERN PANOLA COUNTIES...

AT 416 PM CST...A CONFIRMED LARGE AND DESTRUCTIVE TORNADO WAS LOCATED NEAR MARIANNA...OR 8 MILES WEST OF WALL DOXEY STATE PARK...MOVING NORTHEAST AT 55 MPH.

TORNADO EMERGENCY FOR HOLLY SPRINGS. TAKE COVER NOW. THIS IS A PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS SITUATION.





Flood Advisory

Heavy rainfall resulting in:

- Minor ponding on roadways or localized flooding
- Rises on area creeks & rivers







Flash Flood Warning

Heavy rainfall, typically from thunderstorms, resulting in:

- Significant flooding of roadways
- Cars stalling in flood waters
- Flooding of businesses & homes





Communicating Threats



Cell Phone Apps











WEAs















Social Media



Communicating Threats



NOAA Weather Radio

- Fastest way to get warnings!
- Operates 24/7
- Program for just your county or multiple counties
- Available in most stores and online
- Have multiple ways to receive warnings!





Communicating Threats



Wireless Emergency Alerts

- Emergency messages sent by authorized government bodies through mobile carriers
- 360 character max
- Uses cell phone towers within a warning to broadcast
- Severe Thunderstorm WEAs only if 80+ mph winds and/or 2.75 inch hail expected

Warning Type
Tsunami
Tornado
Severe Thunderstorm
Extreme Wind
Hurricane
Typhoon
Flash Flood
Dust Storm
Blizzard
Ice Storm
Lake Effect Snow



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Emergency Alert Yesterday, 5:52 PM Tornado Warning in this area til 6:15 PM EDT. Take shelter now. Check local media. -NWS





Tornadoes

- Seek inside shelter in a basement or interior room on the lowest floor away from windows. Put as many walls between you and outside as possible.
- Go to designated shelter in office buildings, hotels, and shopping malls
- Find nearest available shelter in open country









Tornadoes: Schools

- Follow school tornado drills
- Go to interior hallways and small rooms away from windows
- Avoid large rooms like gymnasiums and cafeterias









Tornadoes: Mobile Homes

- Mobile homes are easily damaged and destroyed by tornadoes
- Can very easily be overturned
- If possible, abandon mobile homes for community shelter or sturdier building



Mobile Home vs Well Built Structure both with EF-2 damage







Vehicles

- Automobiles are not safe in tornadoes!
- Abandon cars and trucks for a storm shelter or sturdy buildings if possible
- If sturdy shelter is not possible, get down in your car and cover your head or seek shelter in low lying ditch







Damaging Winds

- Take shelter inside a building away from glass
- If caught outdoors, stay away from trees and power lines

MILTON, Tenn. - A man was killed in Rutherford County when a tree fell on him during a thunderstorm.

The storm passed through the area around 6:12 p.m. bringing with it reports of hail and strong winds.

Fire Chief, Larry Farley, said the 64-year-old man was riding a ATV toward







Large Hail

- Take shelter inside a building away from glass
- If in a vehicle, stay inside and wait for hail to end



Quarter to
Ping Pong Ball Hail







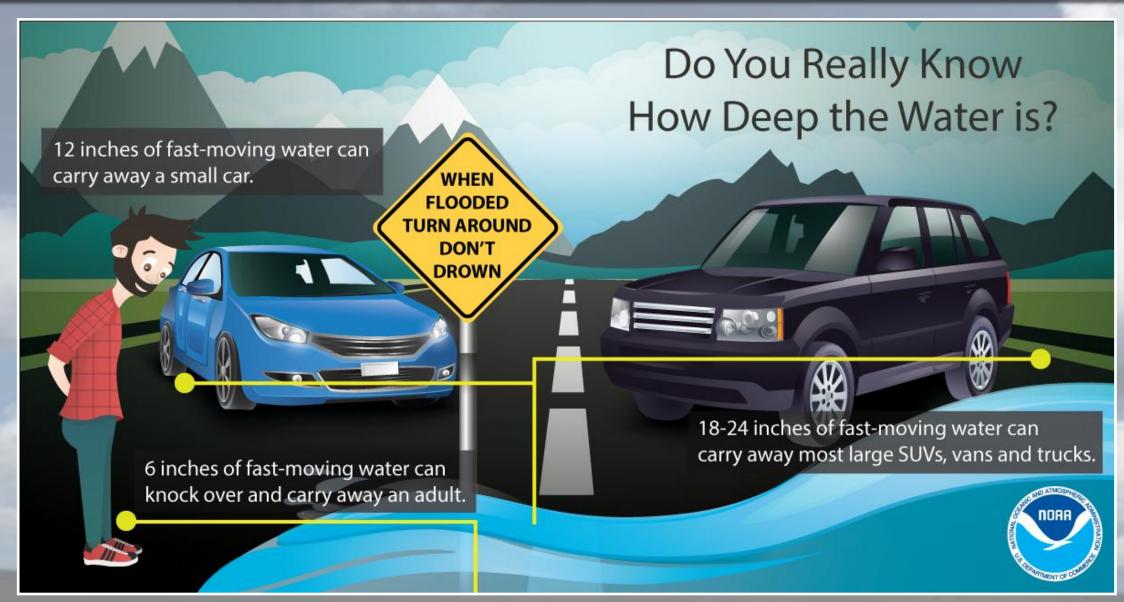
Lightning

- When thunder roars, go indoors!
- Take shelter inside a building or automobile
- Stay away from all wired electronics and plumbing













Flash Flooding

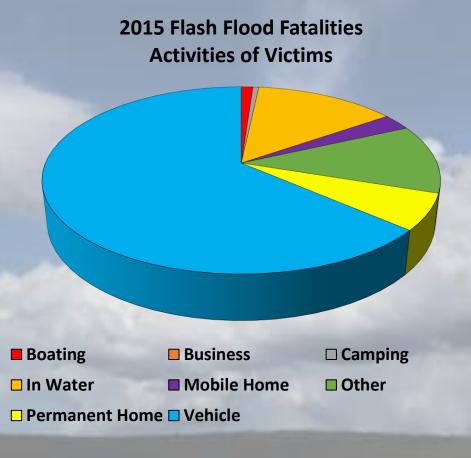
- Never drive around barricades – the water may be deeper than you think
- Don't cross flooded roadways – the road may not be there!







Flash Flooding: The #1 weather-related killer



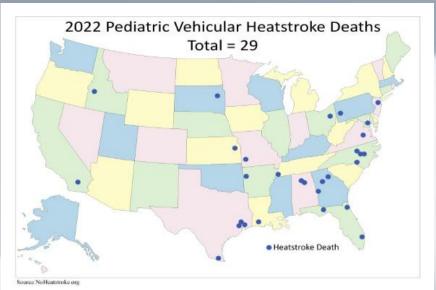


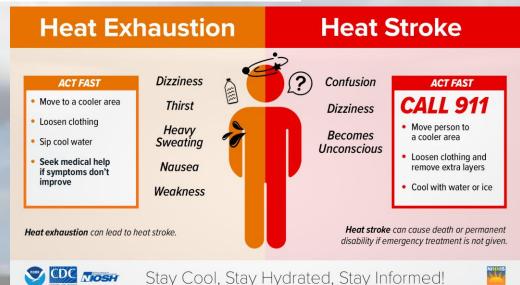




Heat

- Look before you lock
- Pets in cars / outdoors
- Elderly
- People with chronic health issues
- Pregnant women









Cold / Winter

- Prepare: Emergency kit for your car
- Exposure kills: dress in layers and protect skin
- Driving: slow down and leave extra distance between vehicles



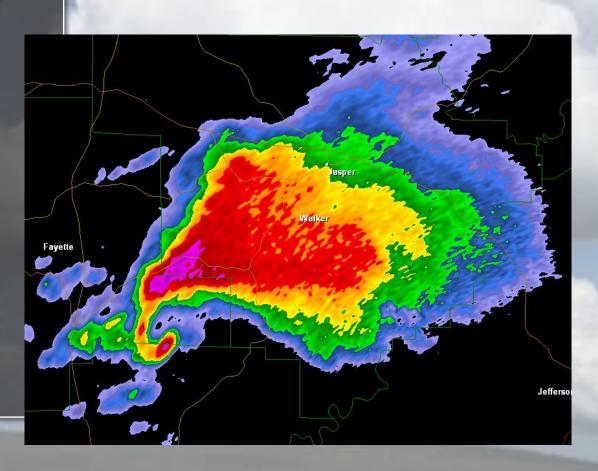






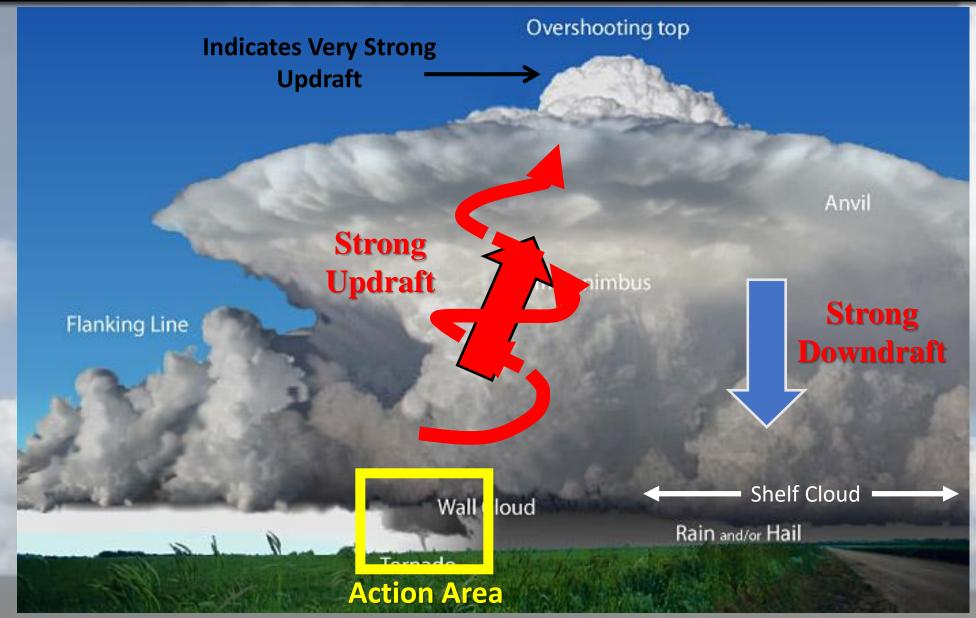
Supercell Thunderstorms

- Strongest and longest lasting type of thunderstorm
- Contains a rotating updraft called a mesocyclone
- High severe potential
- Can produce very large hail and the most violent tornadoes
- Typically move from southwest to northeast in Middle Tennessee













Wall Cloud

- Lowering of the rain-free cloud base
- Appears due to lower pressure causing condensation
- Slopes down and towards the rain
- Tornadoes typically drop from wall clouds







Wall Cloud: Checklist

- Rotation
- Persistence
- Rising Motion
- Wall cloud does not always mean tornado!







Shelf Cloud: Checklist

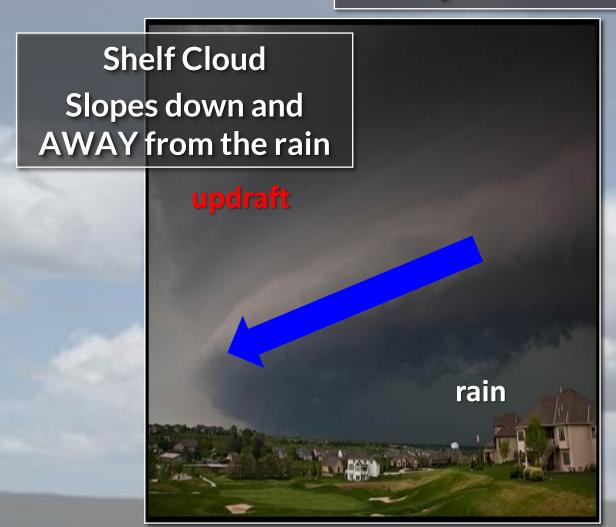
- Appears as wedge-shaped cloud
- Occurs on leading edge of a gust front
- Slopes downward away from rain/hail
- While mostly associated with squall line, can occur with any type of thunderstorm
- Occupies large expanse of horizon

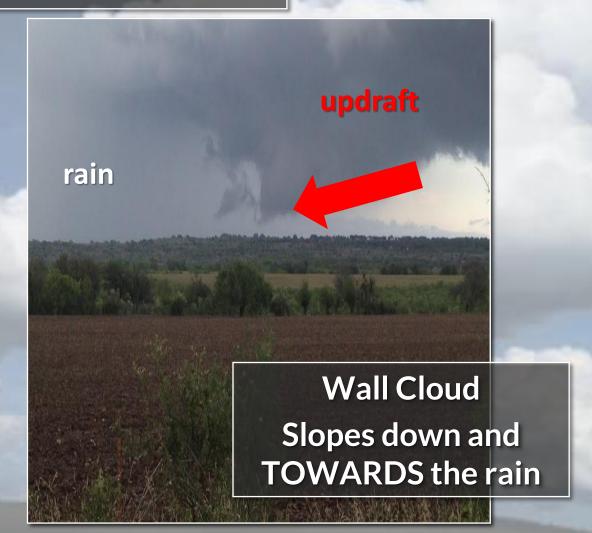






Shelf Cloud or Wall Cloud?









Funnel Cloud

- Typically forms from rotating wall cloud
- Watch for debris at the surface
- Debris under the funnel or visible contact with the ground makes it a tornado
- Attached to the cloud base



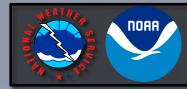




Tornado

- Definition: A violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and extending from the base of a thunderstorm
- Tornadoes are not always classic looking or well defined
- If you see a rotating wall cloud or funnel cloud, look for debris!

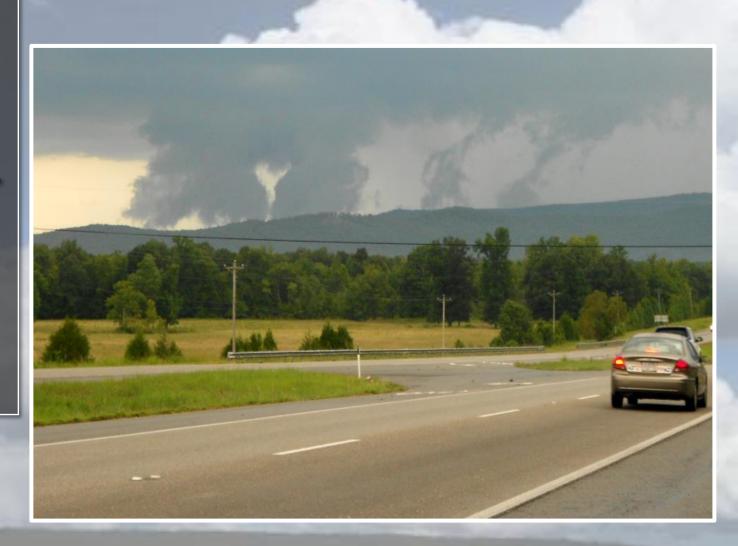






Scud Cloud

- Ominous-looking but harmless clouds
- Can occur with wall cloud or shelf cloud
- No rotation
- No rapid vertical motion
- No inflow



































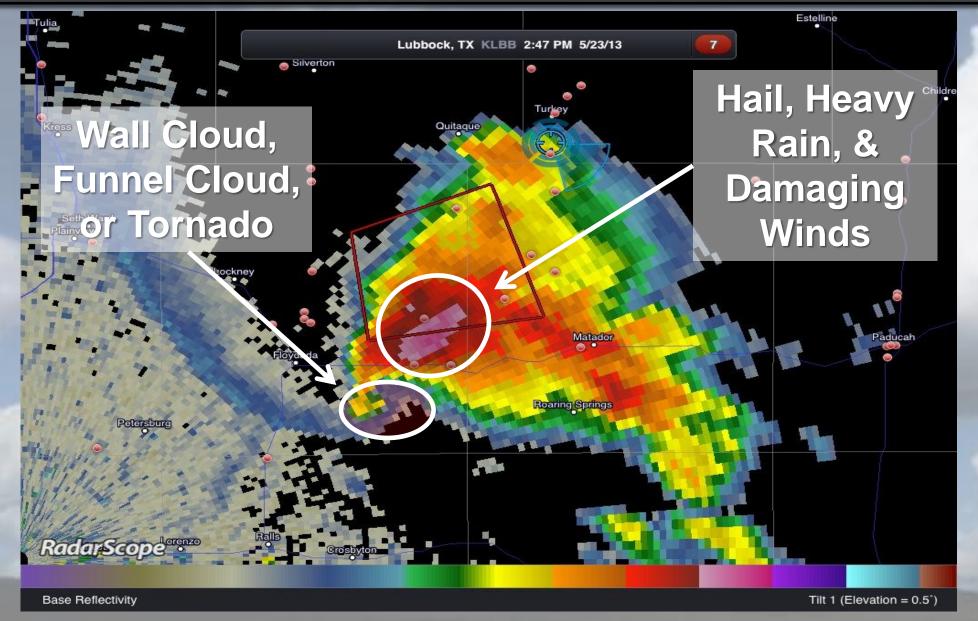






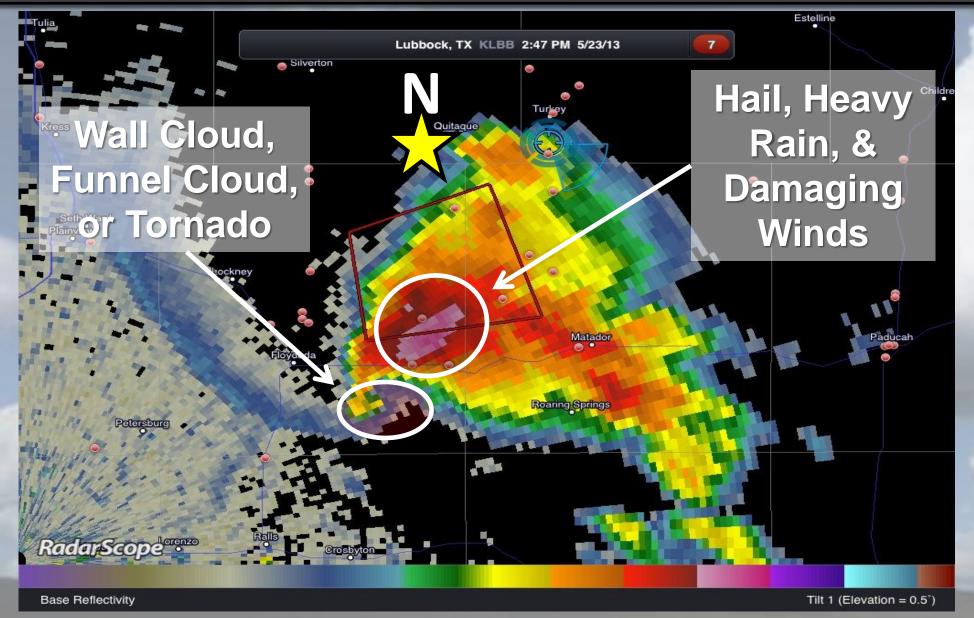


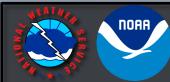




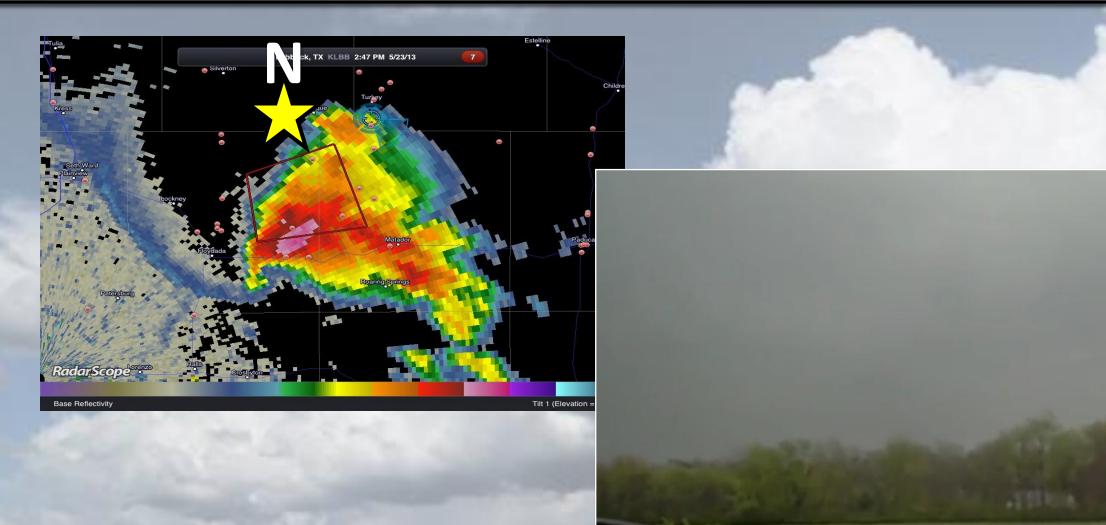






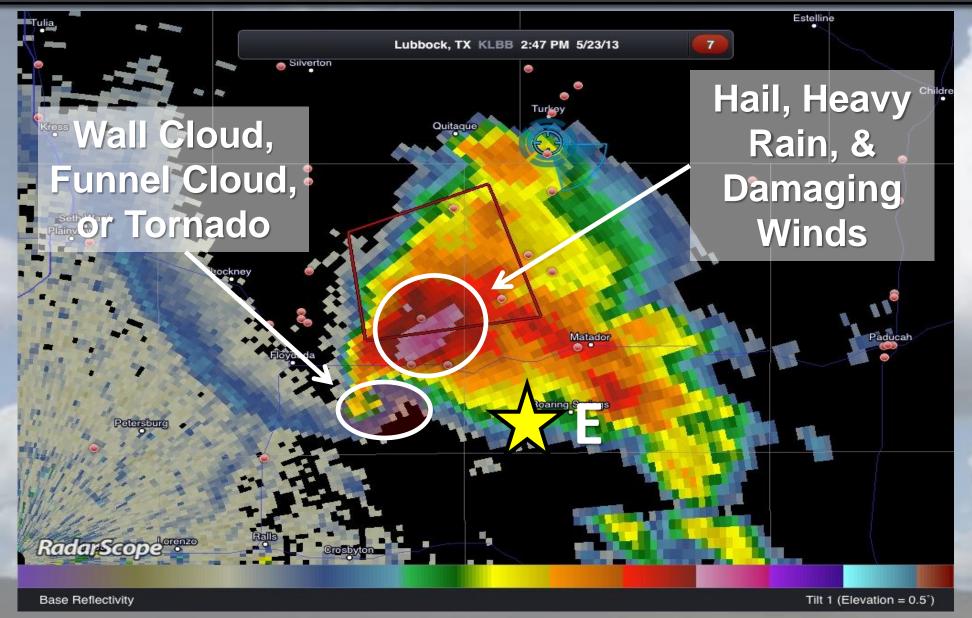






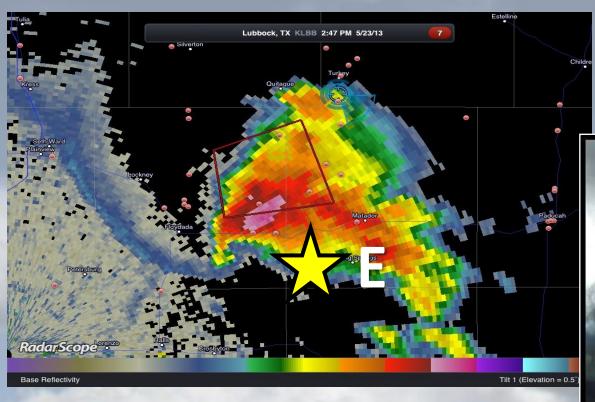








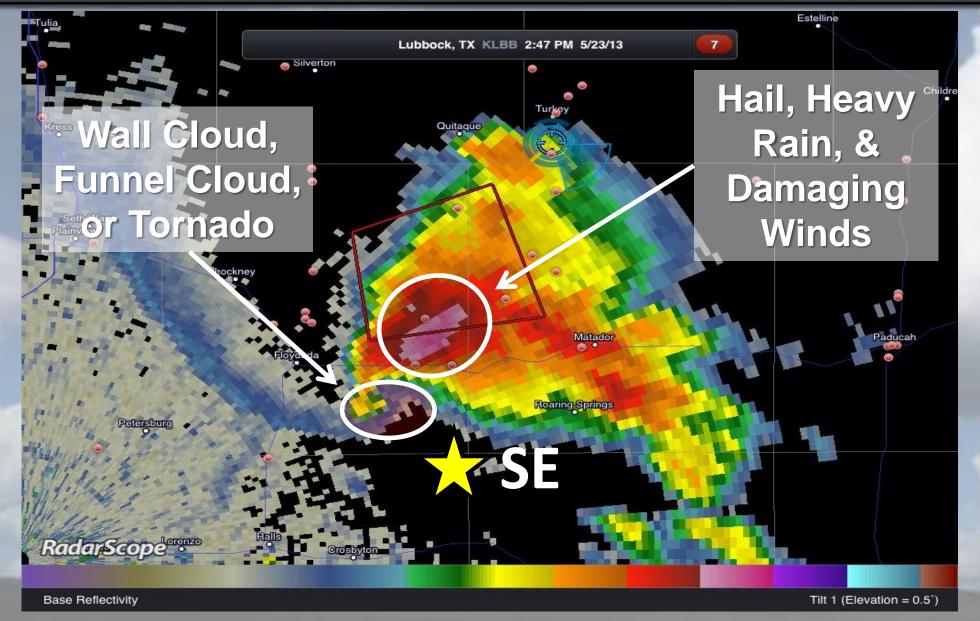




















Reporting Severe Weather to NWS



NWS Needs To Know:

What

When

Where



What type of severe weather is occurring?

When did the severe weather occur?

Where was the severe weather?

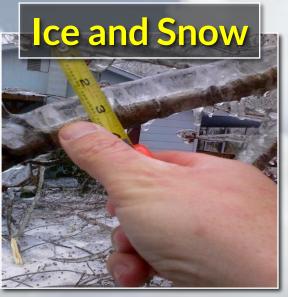




NWS needs reports of:

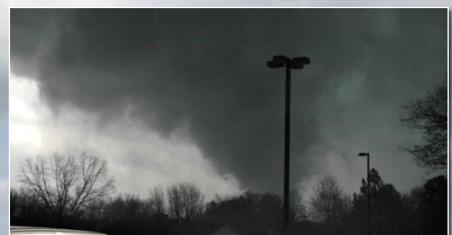












Funnel Clouds and Tornadoes







Hail

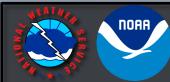
- Report the largest size stone you see
- Compare to common objects







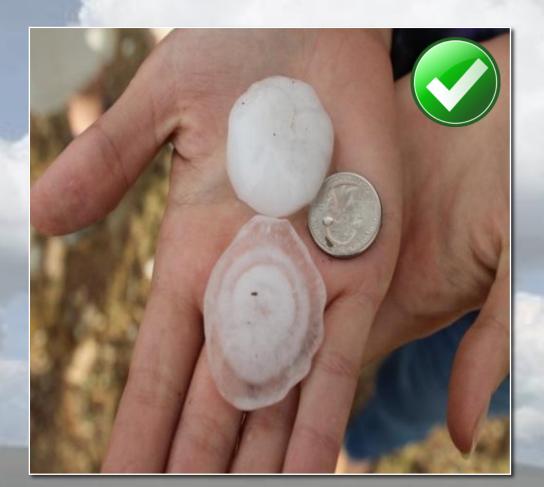
Penny	0.75 inches
Nickel	0.88 inches
Quarter	1.00 inches
Half Dollar	1.25 inches
Ping Pong Ball	1.50 inches
Golf Ball	1.75 inches
Hen Egg	2.00 inches
Tennis Ball	2.50 inches
Baseball	2.75 inches
Tea Cup	3.00 inches
Grapefruit	4.00 inches
Softball	4.50 inches





What's wrong with this picture?









Wind Damage and Estimates

- Wind damage is just important as wind speed measurements
- Specify if gust is measured or estimated
- Most estimates are too high







Flash Flooding





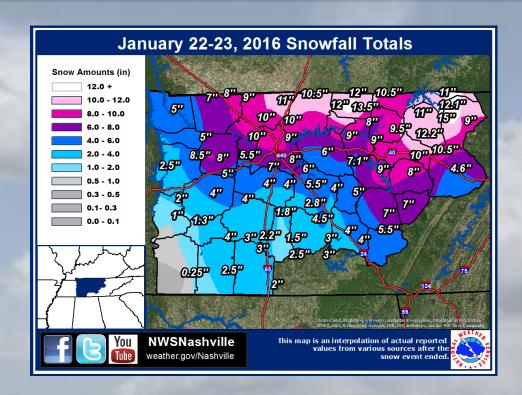








Snowfall or Ice Accumulations







Reporting the Where



Reporting Location

- Be clear with your location using intersections or crossroads if at all possible
- Use caution with addresses on social media



Example: I'm on Couchville Pike about half a mile east of the intersection of Weakley Lane. There are trees down on powerlines and on the road.





How to Report Severe Weather



- Do not assume that if a warning is issued, the NWS knows for certain that severe weather has occurred. (we want to hear from you!)
- Never assume your report is not important.
- Do not exaggerate your report!



NWS Nashville



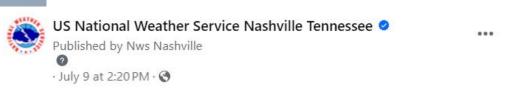
@NWSNashville



Social Media Reporting - Facebook







*** CANCELED ***

After discussion with SPC, we've decided on a Middle TN. This watch technically goes until 11 counties will likely be cleared from the watch v focused on a time frame of now until 8 pm. Ple

US National Weather Service Nashville Tennessee Published by Nws Nashville June 30 at 5:02 AM · ***CANCELLED***

NWS Nashville @ @NWSNashville · 26s

Tornado Watch until 11 pm CDT
Flash flood warning for parts of Robertson and Sumner Counties including the cities of White House, Millersville, and Shackle Island until 7 am.



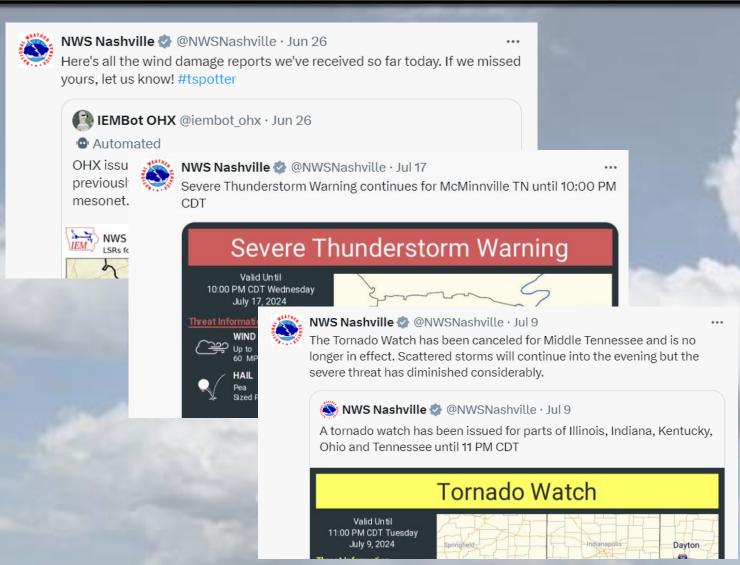


- Many times, we'll make a special post soliciting reports
- No need to wait!
 Post reports in any of our posts.
 We're monitoring them all!



Social Media Reporting - X (Twitter) (1)





- When posting on X, be sure to include #tspotter
- These reports can be easily filtered by our X brigade of folks helping us out
- Remember: what, where and when!







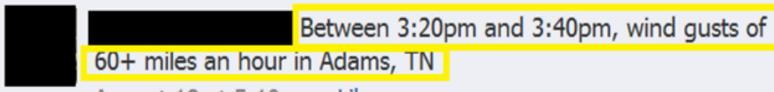
US National Weather Service Nashville Tennessee

Strong to severe thunderstorms are moving southward out of Kentucky into northern parts of Middle Tennessee this afternoon. Any reports of high winds or hail would be greatly appreciated!

2,384 Impressions · 0.08% Feedback

August 18 at 3:18pm · Like · Comment



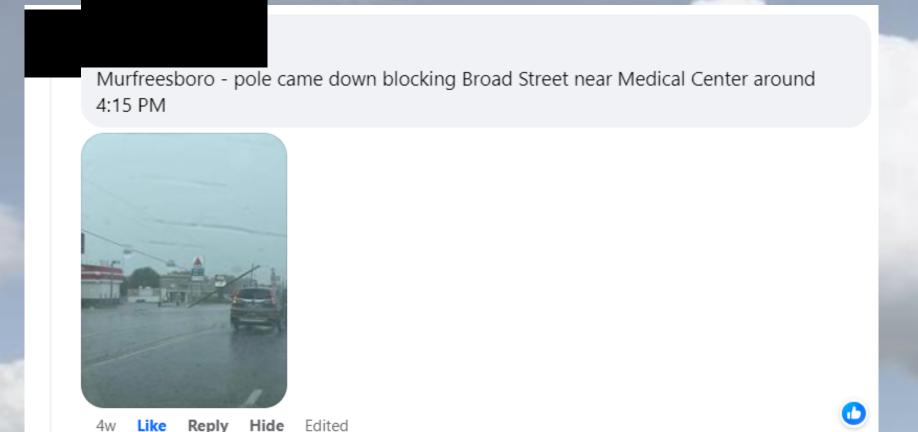


August 18 at 5:19pm · Like

Is this a good report?







Is this a good report?





· Jun 26

Wind damage. Large branches from tulip poplar tree on house. Fitzpatrick Road Donelson 1 mile from Percy Priest Dam.

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Is this a good report?





Jun 26

Wish I got a photo but we passed by a closed road with large branch down. It was on Hamilton Dr. in Murfreesboro between W Clark Blvd. and Sunset Ave. Police were blocking road access and county crews were already onscene. #tspotter

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NWS Nashville Presents

Weather 101

- Rip Currents
- Global Circulations
- Hurricanes
- The Basics
- NWS Damage Surveys
- Severe Storm Elements
- Satellites

- Tsunamis
- Flash Flooding
- METARs and Upper Air Patterns
- Upper Air Soundings
- The Radar
- Quasi-Linear Convective Systems
- Weather Models

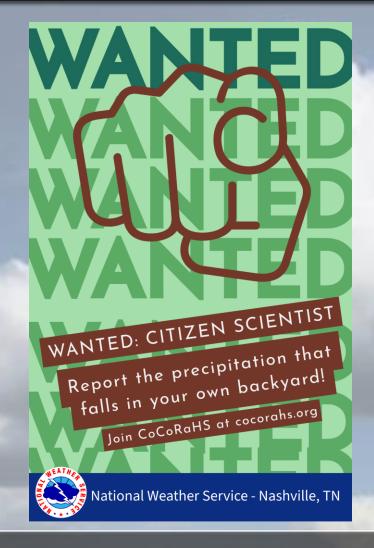
weather.gov/ohx/weather101
No more than 1 hour classes with Q&A
Totally FREE!



CoCoRaHS







Join us at cocorahs.org



Questions?



Thank You for Attending!

Scott Unger scott.unger@noaa.gov 615-754-8500

If you were not alone during this presentation, please send an email with the number of people in attendance