

# Weather Spotters: What and When to Report

**Two ways to report: By PHONE or ONLINE (version 2017)**

1. Spotter phone number: **1-800-240-3022**. We are here 24/7/365

2. **weather.gov/sandiego** - click on **“Submit Report”** under **Current Hazards tab** or from SKYWARN page <http://swskywarn.org/>

<https://docs.google.com/a/noaa.gov/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmK39C2BRDfHtGgKMqQmnzcMS7ggCbeMWrrlYqgtPRmgrcEw/viewform> (use this form)

<b>Flooding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rainfall: How much rain in a given time (e.g., 1 inch in 20 minutes). <i>Rainfall rates (e.g, 4 inches per hour) should not be reported</i></li><li>• <i>Flooding: urban streets, ponding of water in low lying areas or poor drainage</i></li><li>• <b>Flash Flooding (swift moving and greater than 6 inches)</b>. Report flooding that is threatening life or property or disrupting traffic.</li></ul>
<b>Winter Weather</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Snowfall amount (new,duration, total). Snow depth and total to the nearest INCH</b></li><li>• Elevation of snow level, heavy snow and blizzard conditions</li><li>• Icy roads, road closures, chain control, unusually low temperatures and wind chills</li></ul>
<b>Wind</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gust of &gt; 40 mph, and all wind related damage (e.g., trees or power poles down)</li></ul>
<b>Extreme Heat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• &gt;95 F near the coast, &gt;105 F in the inland valleys, &gt;115 F in the deserts</li></ul>
<b>Fog</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dense fog with visibility is at or near zero (report in feet or miles or impacts)</li></ul>
<b>Thunderstorms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hail size (for larger hail compare to coins or measure) and accumulation, wind gusts, lightning strikes causing fire, any damage</li></ul>
<b>Tornadoes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funnel clouds, waterspouts or any rotating cloud, in contact with ground (tornado) and confirmed injuries or damage</li></ul>
<b>Surf and Coastal Impacts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surf 6 feet or higher, any flooding by combination of high tides and/or high surf</li><li>• Strong rip currents</li><li>• Tidal overflow and flooding or tsunami impacts such as strong currents</li></ul>

Visit Southwest California Skywarn on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/swskywarn>

**PHOTOS:** Send to [alexander.tardy@noaa.gov](mailto:alexander.tardy@noaa.gov) or [nwssgxspotters@gmail.com](mailto:nwssgxspotters@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** [http:// www.facebook.com/NWSSanDiego](http://www.facebook.com/NWSSanDiego)

**Twitter:** @NWSSanDiego #cawx #wxreport #social

**YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/NWSSanDiego>

# Field Guide to Observing Weather

## Estimating Winds

- 15-20 mph: Raises dust and loose paper; small branches moved
- 20-25 mph: Small trees begin to sway; whitecaps on water
- 25-30 mph: Large branches in motion; whistling in wires
- 30-40 mph: Whole trees in motion; difficulty walking against the wind
- 40-45 mph: Breaks twigs of trees; impedes progress
- 45-55 mph: Breaks small tree branches; slight structural damage possible
- 55-65 mph: Breaks large tree branches; pushes over shallow rooted trees; considerable structural damage to chimneys, TV antennas (**Severe Thunderstorm winds are defined as 58 mph or higher**)
- 65-75 mph: Widespread damage
- >75 mph: Severe damage and destruction

## Hail Size (measure hail size or compare to coins)

- 1/4 inch = Pea size
- 1/2 inch = Mothball size (do not report as marble size)
- 3/4 inch = Penny or Dime size
- 1 inch = Quarter size (Severe Thunderstorms are issued for 1 inch hail or higher)**
- 1 3/4 inch = Golf ball size
- 2 3/4 inch = Baseball size

## Definitions

### **Tornado or Landspout**

A violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm and in contact with the ground

### **Funnel Cloud or Wall Cloud**

A rotating, funnel-shaped or low cloud base, extending from a thunderstorm base **not** in contact with the ground

### **Waterspout**

A small, relatively weak rotating column of air in contact with the ocean or other large body of water

### **Downburst or Microburst**

A strong downdraft from a thunderstorm, with an outrush of strong wind on or near the ground

**SAFETY FIRST! Do not endanger yourself or others**

**Thank you for being a weather spotter! Your reports may be used in NWS Advisories or Warnings! The information you provide will be used for storm verification and improve future forecasts and warnings.**