

## What to Listen For

### Weather **Watch**:

A Watch is issued when conditions become favorable for severe weather; it does not necessarily mean it is going to happen. Spotter networks are usually activated after a Watch is issued.

### Weather **Warning**:

A Warning is issued when severe weather is occurring or is imminent. Analysis of National Weather Service Doppler radar and spotter reports are used to issue a Warning.

## How to Receive Weather Information

The NWS Green Bay web site contains many links to forecasts and severe weather outlooks, watches, and warnings. The web should be your first stop in preparing for the potential of severe weather:

<http://www.weather.gov/grb>

NOAA Weather Radio is also a great way to receive forecasts and warnings from the National Weather Service.

## Learn More

Additional spotter training courses and information is available online:

<http://weather.gov/grb/skywarn>

## Spotter Reporting

We want to hear from you with your severe weather report!

Reporting to the NWS:  
<http://weather.gov/grb/report>

*Trained spotters should call our toll-free spotter hotline!*

### How to Report:

- **Who** you are
- **What** you observed
- **Where** the event occurred:  
Exact location and county
- **When** the event occurred
- **Damage** that you witnessed

### What to Report:

- Tornadoes
- Funnel clouds
- Rotating wall clouds
- Hail (any size)
- Winds (50 mph or greater)  
Estimated or measured?
- Flooding, including water depth
- Snowfall (2" or greater)
- Severe blowing/drifted snow
- Ice accumulation
- Any weather phenomena causing death or serious injury



NWS Green Bay PK/03-20  
[www.weather.gov/grb](http://www.weather.gov/grb)

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# Severe Weather Spotter Quick Reference

National Weather Service  
Green Bay, Wisconsin



**For more information contact:**

NOAA/NWS Green Bay  
[nws.greenbay@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.greenbay@noaa.gov)  
[www.weather.gov/grb](http://www.weather.gov/grb)

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## Spotter Tips

Skywarn spotters provide critical information for all hazards. Spotting for severe storms can be dangerous and requires considerable skill. If you are not comfortable in any weather situation, immediately seek shelter.

### Remember:

- Our best spotters practice safety first.
- Most tornadoes move from southwest to northeast but can move from any direction. The best viewing angle is south of the storm or to the right of its path.
- Knowing the movement of the storm is important to report and critical to your safety. If you see a storm feature such as a tornado grow in size, it is likely heading toward you. If you can clearly see the storm and you're in a vehicle, find the nearest road and move south away from the storm's path, or to the right of its movement.
- Tornadoes and rain shafts can look alike. Look for rotation and upward motion. Also look for other visual clues, such as a wall cloud and storm rotation.
- Report accurately: a **tornado** is a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground; a **funnel cloud** is a rotating column of air not reaching the ground. Be observant—sometimes there is no visible connection between the cloud and the ground, even though the tornado is causing debris to be blown about on the ground.
- A **wall cloud** is a lowering of the cloud base below the storm tower that may or may not rotate.

## Estimating Wind Speed

Most wind damage from thunderstorms is caused by straight-line winds (also known as downbursts). When reporting wind speed, remember to include whether the report was measured or estimated, and describe any damage. If you cannot measure the wind speed, use the table below to estimate:

25-30 mph:	Large branches move; whistling heard in wires.
30-40 mph:	Whole trees move.
40-45 mph:	Twigs and small branches break; walking impeded.
45-55 mph:	Larger branches and weak limbs may break; slight structural damage occurs.
55-65 mph:	Moderate structural and tree damage occur.
65+ mph:	Heavy to severe structural and tree damage occur.

## Measuring Hail

Find the largest stone and measure the diameter at the widest point. Report to the nearest ¼ inch. If you cannot safely measure the hail, compare its size to known objects, such as coins (but not marbles). Hail larger than a softball should be saved in a freezer for possible examination by the NWS.

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words!

Skywarn spotters often observe amazing weather phenomena. They also take photos of what they are witnessing. Whether it's a tornado in the distance or ice taking down power lines, the NWS Green Bay office learns a great deal from spotter photos. If you are willing to allow the NWS to use your photo in our research and outreach efforts, please send them to us. Email your images and include the exact location, date, and time of the event and the photographer's name to:

**[nws.greenbay@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.greenbay@noaa.gov)**

Better yet, post them to our Facebook or Twitter pages which are monitored in real time!

### Spotter and Weather Resources

**NWS Green Bay Web Site**  
[www.weather.gov/grb](http://www.weather.gov/grb)



**NWS Green Bay Spotter Page**  
[www.weather.gov/grb/skywarn](http://www.weather.gov/grb/skywarn)



**NWS Green Bay on Facebook**  
[www.facebook.com/NWSGreenBay](http://www.facebook.com/NWSGreenBay)



**NWS Green Bay on Twitter**  
[www.twitter.com/NWSGreenBay](http://www.twitter.com/NWSGreenBay)

