
ACID RAIN	Cloud or rain droplets containing pollutants, such as oxides of sulfur and nitrogen, to make them acidic.
ADVISORY	Issued for weather situations that cause significant inconveniences but do not meet warning criteria and, if caution is not exercised, <i>could</i> lead to life-threatening situations.
AIR MASS	A large body of air having similar horizontal temperature and moisture characteristics.
ALTOCUMULUS	Mid-altitude clouds with a cumuliform shape.
ALTOSTRATUS	Mid-altitude clouds with a flat sheet-like shape.
ANEMOMETER	An instrument that measures wind speed.
ANVIL	A flat, elongated cloud formation at the top of a thunderstorm.
ATMOSPHERE	The gaseous envelope surrounding the earth, composed primarily of nitrogen and oxygen.
BAROMETER	An instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure.
BLIZZARD	A winter storm with sustained winds or frequent gusts in excess of 35 mph accompanied by considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to 1/4 of a mile or less. These conditions are expected to prevail for at least three hours.
BLOWING OR DRIFTING SNOW	Wind driven snow that reduces visibility intermittently at or below 1/4 of a mile, typically hampering travel. The snow may be falling snow or snow that has already accumulated but is being picked up and blown by strong winds.
BLOWING DUST	Reduction of visibility by winds blowing across dry ground with little or no foliage.
BOW ECHO	An accelerated portion of a squall line of thunderstorms, taking on bow configuration, created by strong downburst winds.
BROKEN CLOUDS	Clouds which cover between 6/10 and 9/10 of the sky.

CEILING	The height of the lowest layer of clouds, when the sky is broken or overcast.
CHINOOK	A warm, dry wind that blows along the east slopes of the northern Rocky Mountains.
CIRRUS	High clouds above 18,000 feet, composed of ice crystals.
CLIMATE	The historical record of average daily and seasonal weather events.
COLD FRONT	The boundary between a cold air mass that is advancing and a relatively warmer airmass.
CONDENSATION	The process of gas changing to liquid. The process by which water vapor changes into water droplets and clouds.
CUMULONIMBUS	A vertically developed cumulus cloud, often capped by an anvil shaped cloud. Also called a thunderstorm cloud, it is frequently accompanied by heavy showers, lightning, thunder, and sometimes hail or gusty winds.
CUMULUS CLOUD	A cloud in the shape of individual detached domes, with a flat base and a bulging upper portion resembling cauliflower. A cloud less vertically-developed than a cumulonimbus cloud.
CUT OFF LOW	An area of low pressure aloft cut off from the jet stream.
CYCLONE	An area of low pressure around which winds blow counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere. Also the term used for a hurricane in the Indian Ocean and in the Western Pacific Ocean.
DENSE FOG	A cloud, with its base on the surface, which reduces visibility to 1/4 of a mile or less.
DEW	Moisture that has condensed on objects near the ground, whose temperatures have fallen to the dew point temperature.
DEW POINT	The temperature to which the air must be cooled for water vapor to condense.
DOPPLER RADAR	A type of weather radar that determines whether atmospheric motion is toward or away from the radar. It uses the Doppler effect to measure the velocity of particles suspended in the atmosphere.

DOWNBURST	A severe localized downdraft from a thunderstorm.
DRIZZLE	Small, slowly falling water droplets, with diameters between .2 and .5 millimeters.
DRY LINE	A line that separates very warm, moist air to the east from hot, dry air to the west.
DUST DEVIL	A small, rapidly rotating wind that is made visible by the dust, dirt, or debris it picks up. Also called a whirlwind, it develops best on clear, dry, hot afternoons.
EL NINO	A major warming of the equatorial waters in the Pacific Ocean. El Nino events usually occur every 3 to 7 years, and are characterized by shifts in "normal" weather patterns.
FLASH FLOOD	A flood which is caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than six hours, leading to water that rises and falls quite rapidly. A flash flood can also be caused by the failure of a dam, a levee or the break up of an ice jam.
FLOOD STAGE	The level of a river or stream at which considerable inundation of surrounding areas will occur.
FOG	The visible aggregate of minute water droplets suspended in the atmosphere near the earth's surface. Essentially a cloud whose base is at the earth's surface.
FREEZING LEVEL	The altitude in the atmosphere where the temperature equals 32F.
FREEZING RAIN OR DRIZZLE	Rain or drizzle which falls as liquid then freezes upon impact with the ground or objects with a temperature below freezing, coating the objects or ground with ice. Trace amounts can cause travel problems, and large amounts can pull down trees and power lines.
FRONT	The transition zone between two distinct air masses. The basic frontal types are cold fronts, warm fronts, occluded fronts, and stationary fronts.
FROST	The covering of ice, due to condensed water vapor, that is formed on exposed surfaces whose temperature falls below freezing.

FUNNEL CLOUD	A rotating, cone-shaped column of air extending downward from the base of a thunderstorm, but not in contact with the ground. When it reaches the ground it is then called a tornado.
GREENHOUSE EFFECT	The warming of the atmosphere by the trapping of earth's longwave radiation being radiated to space. The gases most responsible for this effect are water vapor and carbon dioxide.
GROUND FOG	Fog produced over the land by the cooling of the lower atmosphere as it comes in contact with the ground. Also known as radiation fog.
GUST	A brief sudden increase in wind speed. Generally the duration is less than 20 seconds and the fluctuation greater than 10 mph.
GUST FRONT	The leading edge of the downdraft from a thunderstorm.
HAIL	Precipitation in the form of circular or irregular-shaped lumps of ice.
HALOS	Rings or arcs that seem to encircle the sun or moon. They are caused by the refraction of light through the ice crystals in cirrus clouds.
HAZE	Fine dry or wet dust or salt particles in the air that reduce visibility.
HEAVY SNOW	A snowfall accumulation of 6 inches or more in less than 12 hours or 8 inches of snow or more in 24 hours at a height of 6000 feet or less. For elevations in excess of 6000 feet, the criterion for heavy snow is greater than 8 inches in 12 hours or greater than 12 inches in 24 hours.
HIGH WINDS	The center of an area of high pressure, accompanied by anticyclonic and outward wind flow in the northern hemisphere. Also known as an anticyclone.
HUMIDITY	The amount of water vapor in the atmosphere. (See relative humidity).
HURRICANE	A severe tropical cyclone with sustained wind speeds in excess of 74 mph (64 knots).
INDIAN SUMMER	An unseasonably warm period near the middle of autumn, usually following a substantial period of

	cool weather.
ISOBAR	A line of equal barometric pressure on a weather map.
JET STREAM	Strong winds concentrated within a narrow band in the atmosphere. The jet stream often "steers" surface features such as fronts and low pressure systems.
KNOT	One nautical mile per hour (1.15 mph).
LIGHTNING	An electrical discharge from a thunderstorm.
LOW	The center of an area of low pressure, accompanied by cyclonic and inward wind flow in the northern hemisphere. Also known as a cyclone.
MACROBURST	Large thunderstorm downbursts with a 2.5 mile diameter or greater outflow of damaging winds lasting 5 to 20 minutes.
MEASURABLE	Precipitation of 0.01" or more.
METEOROLOGY	The study of the atmosphere and atmospheric phenomena.
MICROBURST	A strong localized (less than 2.5 miles in diameter) downdraft from a thunderstorm. Peak gusts last from 2 to 5 minutes.
MILLIBAR	A unit of atmospheric pressure. Normal surface pressure is approximately 1013 millibars.
OCCLUDED FRONT	A complex frontal system that occurs when a cold front overtakes a warm front. Also known as an occlusion.
OUTFLOW	Air that flows outward from a thunderstorm.
OVERCAST	Sky condition when 9/10 or 10/10 of the sky is covered.
OZONE	A form of oxygen containing 3 molecules, usually found in the stratosphere, and responsible for filtering out much of the sun's ultraviolet radiation.
POOR DRAINAGE FLOODING	The flooding of streets, underpasses, low lying areas and poor drainage areas resulting from the ponding of water.
PRECIPITATION	Liquid or solid water molecules that fall from the atmosphere and reach the ground.

PRESSURE	The force exerted by the interaction of the atmosphere and gravity. Also known as atmospheric pressure.
RADAR	An instrument used to detect precipitation by measuring the strength of the electromagnetic signal reflected back. RADAR = RADio Detection And Ranging.
RAIN	Liquid water droplets that fall from the atmosphere, having diameters greater than drizzle.
RAINBOW	Optical phenomenon when light is refracted and reflected by moisture in the air into concentric arcs of color.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY	The amount of water vapor in the air, compared to the amount the air could hold if it was totally saturated. (Expressed as a percentage).
RIDGE	An elongated area of high pressure at the surface or aloft.
RIVER FLOODING	A gradual rise of a river above its banks, attributed to run off of heavy rain and/or snow melt. Normally dry areas become inundated by water.
SCATTERED CLOUDS	Sky condition when between 1/10 and 5/10 of the sky is covered.
SEVERE THUNDERSTORM	A strong thunderstorm with wind gusts in excess of 58 mph and/or hail with a diameter of 3/4" or more.
SHELF CLOUD	Long, wedge-shaped clouds associated with the gust front. Shelf clouds indicate the downdraft or outflow of a thunderstorm.
SHOWER	Precipitation that is intermittent, in space, time, or intensity.
SLEET	Solid grains of ice which form from the freezing of raindrops or the refreezing of melted snowflakes. These small, transparent ice pellets usually bounce when they hit a hard surface.
SNOW	Frozen precipitation composed of ice particles in complex hexagonal patterns.
SNOW ADVISORY	A snowfall accumulation of two to five inches at an elevation of 6000 feet or less. A snow advisory may be issued when an inch of snow is expected

	for the first time in a season. Snow advisories are not issued for elevations above 6000 feet.
SNOW FLURRIES	Light snow showers, usually of an intermittent nature with no measurable accumulation.
SQUALL LINE	A non-frontal band or solid line of thunderstorms which typically produce strong winds.
STATIONARY FRONT	A transition zone between air masses, with neither advancing upon the other.
STRAIGHT LINE WINDS	Damaging thunderstorm winds produced as air rushes downward from a thunderstorm. Often called gust fronts, downburst, or microburst winds these winds originate from thunderstorm downdrafts and may produce damage similar to that of a tornado.
STRATOSPHERE	The layer of the atmosphere above the troposphere, where temperature increases with height.
STRATUS	Flat low level clouds.
SUPERCELL	A highly organized thunderstorm with a rotating updraft, known as a mesocyclone. It poses an inordinately high threat to life and property. Often produces large hail, strong winds, and tornadoes.
SUSTAINED WINDS	The wind speed obtained by averaging the observed values over a one minute period.
THERMAL	Small rising column of air due to surface heating.
THUNDER	The sound wave produced as a lightning stroke heats the air causing it to rapidly expand.
THUNDERSTORM	A storm with lightning and thunder, produced by a cumulonimbus cloud, and usually associated with gusty winds, heavy rain, and sometimes hail and tornadoes.
TORNADO	A violently rotating column of air below the base of a thunderstorm, and in contact with the ground. A tornado does not require the visible presence of a condensation funnel cloud.
TRACE	Precipitation amounts less than 0.01".
TRADE WINDS	Persistent low-level tropical winds that blow from the subtropical high pressure centers towards the

	equatorial low.
TROPICAL DEPRESSION	Tropical mass of thunderstorms with a cyclonic wind circulation and winds between 20 and 34 knots.
TROPICAL DISTURBANCE	An organized mass of tropical thunderstorms, with a slight cyclonic circulation and winds less than 20 knots.
TROPICAL STORM	An organized cyclone in the tropics with wind speed between 35 and 64 knots.
TROUGH	An elongated area of low pressure at the surface or aloft.
TURBULENCE	Disrupted flow in the atmosphere that produces gusts and eddies.
VIRGA	Precipitation falling from the base of a cloud and evaporating before it reaches the ground.
VISIBILITY	The horizontal distance an observer can see and identify a prominent object.
WALL CLOUD	An isolated lowering of a cloud that is attached to the rain-free base of a thunderstorm, generally to the rear of the visible precipitation area. Wall clouds indicate the updraft of or the inflow to a thunderstorm.
WARM FRONT	A boundary between a warm air mass that is replacing a cooler air mass.
WARNING	Issued when a particular hazard is "imminent" or already occurring: tornado warning, flash flood warning.
WATCH	Forecast issued in advance to alert the public of the possibility of a particular hazard: tornado watch, flash flood watch.
WATERSPOUT	A column of rotating air over a body of water: a tornado over the water.
WIND CHILL	The apparent temperature that describes the cooling effect on exposed skin by the combination of temperature and wind, expressed as a loss of body heat. An increase in wind speed or decrease in temperature will accelerate the effect. A wind chill factor of 30 degrees or lower on exposed skin will result in frostbite in a short period of time.

WIND SHEAR	The change of wind speed or direction with distance or height.
WIND VANE	An instrument that determines the direction from which a wind is blowing.
