

Weather Terms

Coastal Flood Watch

Flooding may occur along the coastal areas. Water will be substantially higher than mean high tide levels and may inundate inland areas.

Flood Watch

Conditions are right for flooding to happen soon.

Flood Warning

Flooding is occurring. Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so.

Subsidence

A sink hole. Sinkholes are characterized by the ground falling away due to the collapse of underground caverns or washouts.

HAZMAT

Stands for "hazardous materials." These are chemicals which can cause harm to humans, animals or the environment.

Tornado Watch

Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.

Tornado Warning

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If you are in a designated tornado warning area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Severe thunderstorms are occurring.

Tropical Disturbance

An area of thunderstorms in motion in the tropics maintaining its identity for at least 24 hours. It can lead to a tropical depression.

Tropical Depression

A tropical depression is a closed circulation of low atmospheric pressure, originating over tropical waters, which blows counter-clockwise around a center at speeds less than 39 mph. It can lead to a tropical storm.

Tropical Storm

A tropical storm is a closed circulation of low atmospheric pressure, originating over tropical waters, which blows counter-clockwise around a center at speeds ranging from 39 to 73 mph. It can lead to a hurricane.

Tropical Storm Watch

An announcement for specific areas that tropical storm conditions pose a possible threat to coastal areas within 36 hours.

Tropical Storm Warning

A warning that tropical storm conditions, including possible sustained winds within the range of 39 to 73 mph, are expected in specific coastal areas within 24 hours.

Hurricane

A severe tropical cyclone with winds exceeding 74 mph, originating in the tropical regions of the Atlantic Ocean or Caribbean Sea, traveling north, northwest or northeast from its point of origin and usually producing heavy rain.

Hurricane Watch

An announcement issued by the National Hurricane Center when a hurricane becomes a threat to coastal areas. A "Hurricane Watch" is not a "Warning." It indicates that a hurricane is near enough that everybody in the area covered by the "Watch" should listen for subsequent advisories and be ready to take precautionary measures in case hurricane warnings are issued. Watches usually are issued 24 to 36 hours in advance of landfall.

Hurricane Warning

A warning issued by the National Hurricane Center that sustained winds of 74 mph or higher associated with a hurricane are expected in a specific coastal area in 24 hours or less. When a hurricane warning is issued, all precautions should be taken immediately.

Wildfire

Fire that burns quickly and uncontrollably in a forest area or area of thick brush. Wildfires usually start from natural ignition sources such as lightning, although many are started intentionally through carelessness with campfires, disregard for weather conditions, burning yard trash or arsonists.