

How to submit a Weather Spotter report:

Call the *Weather Spotter Hotline* at your
National Weather Service Forecast Office
in Anchorage, toll free at **1-877-696-7748**
OR

Submit your report through our web site at:
<http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/spotter.php>

Or through your local Weather Service Office

At **Valdez**: 907-835-4505, at **Kodiak**: 907-487-2102, at **King Salmon**: 907-246-3303, at **McGrath**: 907-524-3205, at **Bethel**: 907-543-2236, at **Cold Bay**: 907-532-2448, at **Saint Paul**: 907-546-2215.

Weather Spotter Tips:

- ◆ Always practice safety first! Never put yourself in harm's way of hazardous weather or flooding.
- ◆ If you have the time and a camera handy, try capturing the weather phenomena (flooding, water spouts, etc.) or damage (trees downed by winds) that you are observing. Those images can help us teach new forecasters, spotters, and children in our schools.
- ◆ Though lightning is uncommon in parts of Alaska, it is just as deadly as it is elsewhere! Visit our lightning web page, www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov for important safety information.
- ◆ Water spouts are tornadoes over water. Generally they produce wind speeds of 60 mph or more. Never pilot your boat near a water spout.
- ◆ Nearly half of all flood fatalities are auto related. Avoid driving through flooding in roadway dips and low areas. A depth of two inches of water moving at 6 mph will carry away most vehicles. Turn around, don't drown!



Meteorological Conversions

To convert Celsius temperature to degrees Fahrenheit = $(1.8 \times \text{Temp in degC}) + 32$
To convert Fahrenheit temperature to degrees Celsius = $(\text{Temp in degF} - 32)/1.8$

To convert wind speeds in knots to miles per hour = $\text{Speed in Knots} \times 1.15$
To convert wind speeds in miles per hour to knots = $\text{Speed in MPH} \times 0.869$

To convert precipitation in Millimeters to Inches = $\text{Millimeters} \times 0.03937$
To convert precipitation in Inches to Millimeters = $\text{Inches} \times 25.4$

To convert pressure in Millibars (mb) to Inches of Mercury (InHg) = $\text{Mb}/33.86388$
To convert pressure in Inches of Mercury to Millibars = $\text{InHG} \times 33.86388$

How to measure snowfall:

1. Ideally, you want to measure snow on a "snow board." A snow board (*right*) is a clean, preferably white, board roughly 2 by 3 feet. Locate the snow board out in the open away from trees, buildings, fences, etc.,. Alternatives include measuring snowfall on a deck, or out in an exposed section of your yard.



2. Once snow begins to accumulate, measure with a ruler. Measure snow to the tenth of an inch, if possible. Always round upward when reporting. If you measure 3.5 inches, call it 4 inches. If possible, measurements should be taken every 12 hours, and then once the snow has stopped falling. It is helpful to give a grand total for the storm with your final report.

3. If you are not using a snow board, sample several locations in your yard and average. If winds are causing drifting snow, do not average in the drifts.

4. Remember to clear off your snow board after the snow ends. This will ensure you accurately start from scratch when the next storm hits!

Weather Watch: Conditions are favorable for a significant weather event to develop in the defined watch area, generally in 36-72 hours. Forecaster is 60% or more confident, and wants to give everyone an early heads-up.

Weather Advisory: A hazardous weather event is occurring or imminent in the next 36 hours. Forecaster is 80% or more confident. (Example: Winds 45-72 mph)

Weather Warning: A severe weather event is occurring or imminent in the next 36 hours in the warned area. Action should be taken immediately to protect

For more information on becoming a Weather Spotter, please contact:

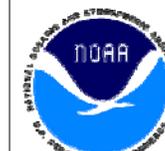
Sam Albanese
National Weather Service
6930 Sand Lake Road
Anchorage, AK 99502
907-266-5117
sam.albanese@noaa.gov

Or visit our web site at:
<http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/spotter.php>

Alaska Weather Spotter Guide: Anchorage



Helping to keep our
communities safe from
severe weather



<http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov>
NOAA's National Weather
Service
Weather Forecast Office
Anchorage

What is a Weather Spotter?

Weather Spotters are caring citizens from various walks of life that volunteer their time and energy to report when hazardous weather is impacting their community. This ground-truth information helps your local National Weather Service office issue more timely and accurate forecasts and warnings. Ultimately Weather Spotter reports can help save lives and property here in Alaska.

Why are Weather Spotters needed?

Your National Weather Service office has access to the data from every automated observing platform located in the area. Unfortunately, this network of sensors is too coarse to capture all of the local weather effects that occur in the beautifully complex terrain of the Great Land. Weather Spotters help fill that void by alerting forecasters to important details. Also, none of these sensors are able to detect all lightning, hail, flooding, waterspouts, tornadoes, or measure snowfall, while Weather Spotters can! Think of it as providing intelligence from the field.

How do I become a Weather Spotter?

Joining the team is easy! Just complete an Alaska Weather Spotter training course. Courses can be arranged in most communities as long as there are five or more residents willing to attend. Contact us for more information. A representative from your local National Weather Service Office will visit your community and conduct a training session. There is also training available on the Internet at: <http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/spotter.php> Simply go through the slides and then submit your contact information via the sign-up form.

How often must I report?

When you become a volunteer Weather Spotter, you are only expected to call or E-mail reports when it is convenient to you. Any information received by your NWS forecasters is better than none at all!

What's in a Weather Spotter report?

WHO you are.

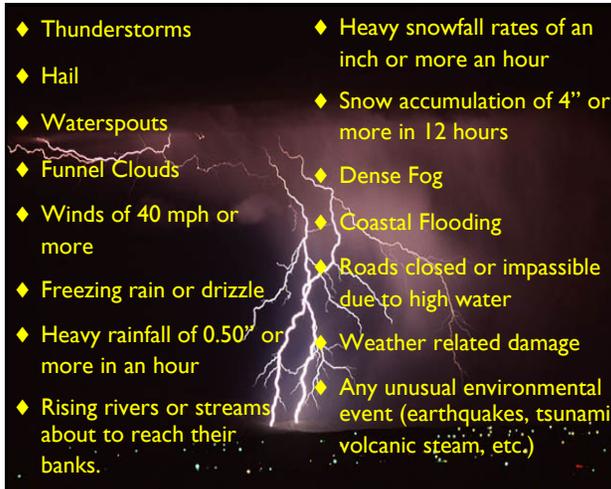
WHAT you observed.

WHEN the event occurred.



What do Weather Spotters report?

Alaska Weather Spotters should submit a report or call whenever they observe the following:



Will the Weather Service ever call me?

Occasionally during a storm, the NWS may solicit Spotter reports. When you sign up to become a Weather Spotter, you have the *option* of providing a contact phone number and the hours of the day we may call you. We will never call you for information outside those hours. Typically, Alaskan Weather Spotters receive a few calls per year. We may also E-mail you in advance of a storm to ask for your vigilance.

Is there anything in it for me?

Aside from learning more about the weather and the satisfying feeling of keeping your community safer, you'll be able to get inside forecast information from the experts! Some offices also produce a special newsletter for their volunteers and recognize their most active spotters. Ask your local office for more information.

Estimating Wind Speed:

High winds are one of the most common severe weather elements we experience in Alaska. Winds are measured by an instrument known as an anemometer. If you cannot directly measure the wind speed, you can use the table below to estimate it:

<1 mph	= Calm, smoke rises vertically.
1-3 mph	= Direction of wind shown by smoke drift not by wind vanes.
4-7 mph	= Wind felt on face; leaves rustle, vanes moved by wind.
8-12 mph	= Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; wind extends light flag.
13-18 mph	= Raises dust and loose paper, small branches moved.
19-24 mph	= Small trees with leaves begin to sway.
25-31 mph	= Large branches in motion; whistling heard in overhead wires; umbrellas used with difficulty
32-38 mph	= Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt walking against wind.
39-46 mph	= Twigs break; wind impedes walking; light objects (lawn furniture) tossed.
47-54 mph	= Branches snap; loose shingles removed; minor damage to sheds/barns.
55-63 mph	= Small trees uprooted, structural damage can occur.
64-72 mph	= Large trees uprooted; widespread damage to structures.
>72 mph	= Hurricane Force: Trees snapped, extensive destruction.

Estimating Hail Size:

Pea	= 1/4 inch diameter
Marble/mothball	= 1/2 inch diameter
Dime/Penny	= 3/4 inch diameter
**Hail this size or larger is considered severe.	
Nickel	= 7/8 inch
Quarter	= 1 inch
Ping-Pong Ball	= 1 1/2 inches
Baseball	= 2 3/4 inches
Softball	= 4 1/2 inches