



National Weather Service

Definitions for SEVERE WEATHR

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH /BE PREPARED/ - issued when severe thunderstorms are **possible**. The watch is issued for a large area and is usually in effect for several hours.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch Means
Be Prepared.
Damaging wind and large hail are possible.

- Have a way to receive weather warnings
- Check for forecast updates
- Have a shelter planned
- Stay weather ready

 
weather.gov/thunderstorm

The graphic features a dark blue background with a sunset over a field. A diagonal blue triangle on the left contains a list of actions. The text "Severe Thunderstorm Watch Means Be Prepared." is in white and yellow, with "Be Prepared." in yellow. Below it, "Damaging wind and large hail are possible." is in white. The NOAA logo and a thunderstorm icon are in the bottom right, along with the URL "weather.gov/thunderstorm".

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING /TAKE ACTION/ - issued when severe weather is **imminent or occurring** and is usually in effect for about an hour.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning Means
TAKE ACTION!
Damaging winds and large hail are expected.

- Take shelter indoors immediately
- Use caution while driving
- Check forecast updates
- Stay weather ready

 
weather.gov/thunderstorm

The graphic features a dark, stormy sky over a field. A diagonal blue triangle on the left contains a list of actions. The text "Severe Thunderstorm Warning Means TAKE ACTION!" is in white and orange, with "TAKE ACTION!" in orange. Below it, "Damaging winds and large hail are expected." is in white. The NOAA logo and a thunderstorm icon are in the bottom right, along with the URL "weather.gov/thunderstorm".



National Weather Service

Definitions for SEVERE WEATHR

TORNADO WATCH /BE PREPARED/ - issued when severe thunderstorms also **may produce** tornadoes. The watch is issued for a large area and is usually in effect for several hours.

TORNADO WARNING /TAKE ACTION/ - issued when a tornado is **imminent or occurring** and is usually in effect for 45 minutes or less

TORNADO TERMINOLOGY

Tornado Watch
Weather conditions could lead to the formation of severe storms and tornadoes. **BE PREPARED:** Know your safe location. Be ready to act quickly if a Warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.

Tornado Warning
A tornado has been spotted or indicated by weather radar, meaning a tornado is occurring or expected soon. **TAKE ACTION:** There is imminent danger to life and property. Immediately seek refuge in the safest location possible.

Tornado Emergency
An exceedingly rare situation with a severe threat to human life and catastrophic damage due to a confirmed violent tornado. **TAKE ACTION:** There is imminent danger to life and property. Immediately seek refuge in the safest location possible.

The NOAA logo is located in the bottom left corner of the graphic.

TORNADO: a funnel-shaped cloud extending downward from the base of a severe thunderstorm which is rapidly rotating and comes into contact with the ground or any objects on the ground

FUNNEL CLOUD: a funnel-shaped cloud extending downward from the base of a thunderstorm which is rapidly rotating and does NOT come into contact with the ground or objects on the ground

WATERSPOUT: a tornado that occurs over the waters



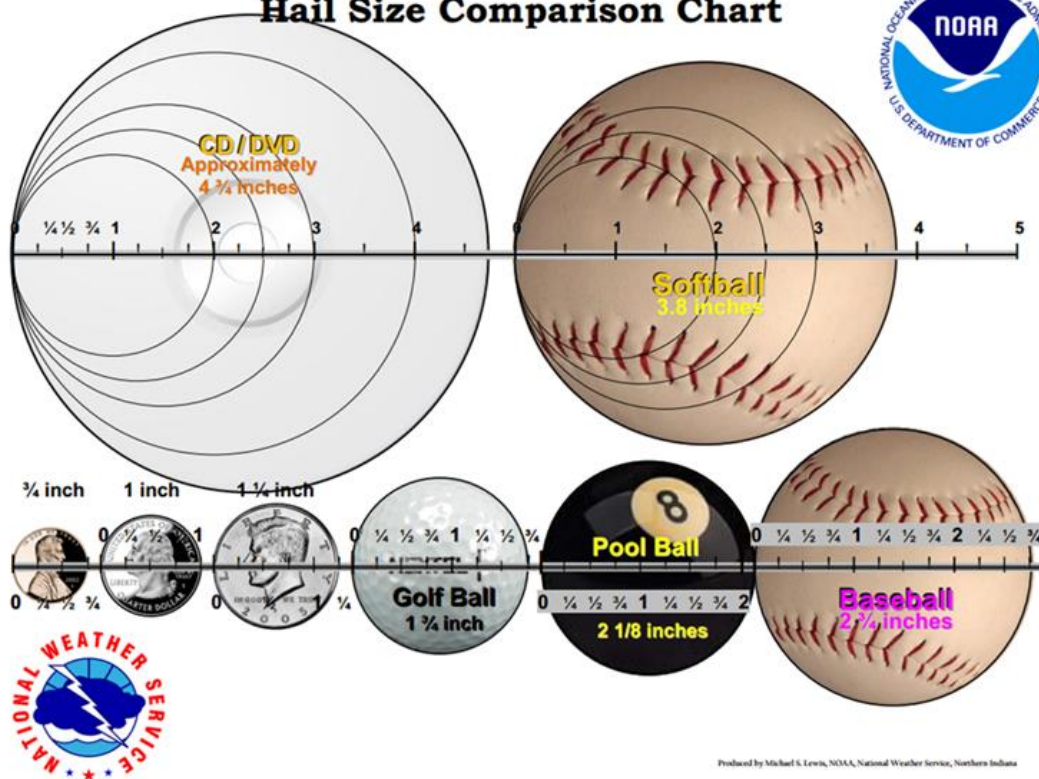
National Weather Service

Definitions for SEVERE WEATHR

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM: a thunderstorm which produces:

- hail 1 inch or greater
- damage to trees, telephone/utility poles and/or any structure
- winds greater than 58 mph
- tornado

Hail Size Comparison Chart



Produced by Michael S. Lewis, NOAA, National Weather Service, Northern Indiana