



SPOTTER REPORTING GUIDELINES NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE STATE COLLEGE



NWS State College UNLISTED SkyWarn Spotter Number: 800-697-0010

- Use this Number **ONLY** to report weather – NOT for general forecasts or questions!

NWS State College LISTED Phone Number: 814-954-6440

- Use this number for routine forecasts and questions
 - This number is answered 24x7
- Choose Option 9 to speak to a forecaster

ALL REPORTS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- ✓ Who you are (spotter)
- ✓ Location and Time
- ✓ Description of Damage
- ✓ Any Injuries or Fatalities

TORNADOES / FUNNEL CLOUDS / WALL CLOUDS:

- Movement and Trend of wall and funnel clouds – make sure they are rotating!
- For Tornadoes...Time of Touchdown and Lift-Up
- Be wary of Tornado look-alikes – Watch for Rotation!
 - Location: The location of the tornado relative to your position (i.e. 1 mile southeast)

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WINDS:

- Estimated Wind Speeds
 - **58 MPH is the NWS criteria for Severe.** This is when trees begin to break / get blown down.
- Damage (structures or trees)
 - Houses, siding, chimneys, small trees, large trees, etc.

HAIL:

- Duration and Quantity
- Size (no “marble size” hail reports please!)
 - Pea: 0.25 inch
 - Penny: 0.75 inch
 - Nickel: 0.88 inch
 - **Quarter: 1.00 inch (Threshold to be considered “SEVERE”)**
 - Half Dollar: 1.25 inch
 - Walnut/Ping Pong Ball: 1.50 inch
 - Golf Ball: 1.75 inch
 - Lime: 2.00 inches
 - Tennis Ball: 2.50 inches
 - Baseball: 2.75 inches
 - Large Apple: 3.00 inches
 - Softball: 4.00 inches



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RAINFALL and FLOODING:

- Rainfall rates greater than 1 inch in an hour
- Significant rainfall thresholds (i.e. 1 inch, 2 inches, 3 inches, etc.)
- Storm Total Rainfall, especially over 1 inch – the more the better!
- Location and Time of Flooding
 - When it started: When did minor flooding transition to a more significant event
- Cause of Flooding
 - Stream overtopping banks, ice jams, blocked storm drains
 - Urban Flooding - Storm Sewers overwhelmed by water
- Ice Jams (whether or not they are causing flooding)
- Damage – Houses flooded...Basements...Road Closures...etc...

WINTER WEATHER:

- Snow
 - When **accumulations** reach 3 and 6 inch mark (2 and 5 inches in Lower Susquehanna Valley)
 - Storm Total Accumulation (both during the storm and especially as soon as possible after the storm ends)
 - Snowfall **rates** greater than > 1 inch per hour
- Sleet: Any occurrence or Accumulation
- Freezing Rain
 - Any occurrence or accumulation
 - Storm Total ice accretion
 - Special notification when accumulation reaches ¼ inch+ (**Warning Criteria**)
 - Remember, when measuring ice accumulation on branches, to subtract the width of the branch and divide by 2!

OTHER:

- When forecast winter precipitation differs significantly from observed (i.e. snowing with no snow in the forecast; sleet, when only snow is forecast)
- Any other significant weather occurrence/oddity (i.e. damage from strong winds not associated with a thunderstorm).

CONTACT: To update your information, email:

john.banghoff@noaa.gov or jonathan.guseman@noaa.gov.

Web Sites and Links

NWS State College Home Page: www.weather.gov/statecollege

Web Based Reporting Form:

See: <https://www.weather.gov/ctp/reportsevere> and click on “Severe weather reports and snowfall measurement form”

Basic Spotter Guide:

https://www.weather.gov/media/bis/Weather_Spotter_Field_Guide.pdf

FACEBOOK: [US National Weather Service State College PA](https://www.facebook.com/USNationalWeatherServiceStateCollegePA)

TWITTER: [@NWSStateCollege](https://twitter.com/NWSStateCollege) and use #PAwx

EMAIL: ctp.stormreports@noaa.gov