



## ALL-HAZARDS REFERENCE GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 2014



# ALL-HAZARD WEATHER AND EMERGENCY ALERT PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR IALERT.COM DISSIMINATION

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- Radiological Hazard Warning
- Shelter In Place Warning



## SEVERE WEATHER

1. **Severe Thunderstorm Watch** – Potential wind exceeding 58 mph or 1 inch hail. County based alert.
2. **Severe Thunderstorm Warning** – Predicted or occurring winds exceeding 58 mph or 1-inch hail. County based alert.
3. **Tornado Watch** – Potential tornado winds 40 mph to 318 mph. County based alert.
4. **Tornado Warning** – Predicted or occurring tornado winds 40 to 318 mph. County based alert.

## WINTER WEATHER

5. **Winter Storm Watch** – Potential for 6 inch or more snowfall or ½ inch or more ice accumulation in 24 to 48 hours.
6. **Winter Storm Warning** – Imminent 6 inch or more snowfall or ½ inch or more ice accumulation in 12 hours.
7. **Blizzard Watch** – Favorable winter storm conditions in the next 24 to 72 hours with sustained or frequent winds of 35 mph or higher with considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to ¼ of a mile or less. Conditions expected to prevail for a minimum of 3 hours.
8. **Blizzard Warning** – Imminent winter storm with sustained or frequent winds of 35 mph or higher with considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to ¼ of a mile or less. Conditions expected to prevail for a minimum of 3 hours.
9. **Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory** – Issued when winds of 25 to 34 mph are expected and accompanied by falling snow and blowing snow, occasionally reducing the visibility to ¼ mile or less. The event should last at least 3 hours.
10. **Heavy Snow Warning** – Issued when snow is expected to accumulate 4 inches or more in 12 hours, or 6 inches in 24 hours.
11. **Winter Weather Advisory** – Expected 3 inch snow accumulation or ice accumulation less than ½ inch in 12 to 36 hours.
12. **Avalanche Watch** – Favorable for natural or human-triggered avalanches that could affect roadways, structures, or backcountry activities.
13. **Avalanche Warning** – Imminent avalanche activity, avalanche danger is considered high or extreme.
14. **Freezing Fog Advisory** – Very light ice accumulation from freezing fog.



15. **Lake Effect Snow Watch** – Favorable Lake induced snowstorm conditions in the next 24 to 72 hours, which produces snow accumulations of 6 or more inches in 12 hours or less.
16. **Lake Effect Snow Warning** – Imminent Lake induced snowstorm conditions in the next 24 to 72 hours, which produces snow accumulations of 6 or more inches in 12 hours or less.
17. **Lake Effect Snow Advisory** – Expected Lake induced snowstorm conditions in the next 12 to 36 hours, which produces snow accumulations of 3 to 6 inches in 12 hours or less.
18. **Lake Effect Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory** – Issued when lake effect snow may pose a hazard in combination with wind driven snow. Criteria for this advisory will vary from location to location.
19. **Freezing Rain Advisory** – Accumulation of less than ½ inch freezing rain in 12 to 36 hours.
20. **Freezing Drizzle Advisory** – Issued for freezing rain when ice accumulations are expected to cause travel problems, but not exceed ¼ inch.
21. **Ice Storm Warning** – Imminent ice accumulation ½ inch or more in 12 to 36 hours.
22. **Sleet Warning** – Issued when a period of sleet is expected to produce ice accumulations of 1 inch or greater, or cause significant disruptions to travel or utilities.
23. **Sleet Advisory** – Issued for accumulating sleet of ¼ to 1 inch. Because sleet usually occurs with other precipitation types, a winter weather advisory will almost always be used in such cases.

## FLOODING

24. **Flood Watch** – Issued when there is the possibility of widespread general flooding over an area within the next 36 hours.
25. **Flood Warning [for River Forecast Point]**– Issued when a river gauge has exceeded, or is forecast to exceed, a predetermined flood state.
26. **Flood Advisory** – Issued when flooding is imminent or occurring, generally within the next 1 to 3 hours, but is not expected to substantially threaten life and property.
27. **Flood Statement** – General flood information for area, usually interim information of an existing flood event.
28. **Flash Flood Watch** – Issued when there is the possibility of flash flooding or urban flooding over an area within the next 36 hours.



29. **Flash Flood Warning** – Issued when flash flooding is imminent, generally within the next 1 to 3 hours. Usually issued based on observed heavy rainfall, but may also be issued for significant dam breaks that have occurred or are imminent.
30. **Flash Flood Statement** – General flash flood information, usually interim information of an existing flash flood event.
31. **Hydrologic Outlook** – Issued as needed to provide information on conditions that could cause flooding or impact water supply. Typically, a Hydrologic Outlook is issued in the spring to define potential flooding hazards or lack thereof.

## **FIRE WEATHER**

32. **Fire Weather Watch** – Issued when dry vegetation and conditions favoring extreme fire danger are expected 12 to 72 hours in the future.
33. **Fire Weather Warning** – See Red Flag Warning.
34. **Red Flag Warning** – Issued when dry vegetation and conditions favoring extreme fire danger are expected, generally within 24 hours.

## **COASTAL WEATHER**

35. **Coastal Flood Watch** – Issued when coastal flooding is possible within 12 to 36 hours.
36. **Coastal Flood Warning** – Issued when coastal flooding is imminent or expected within 12 hours.
37. **Coastal Flood Advisory** – Issued when minor or nuisance coastal flooding is occurring or imminent.
38. **Coastal Flood Statement** – General coastal flood information, typically issued as an interim product to existing coastal flood event.
39. **Beach Hazards Statement** – Issued to provide general safety information. Examples include dangerous currents in surf zone, unusual surf/water/wave conditions, etc.
40. **Lakeshore Flood** – Coastal flooding along any of the Great Lakes and are issued to alert those impacted of conditions which pose or which may pose a threat to life or property.
41. **High Surf Advisory** – Is issued when dangerous water action is expected along the coast. This includes rough surf, large breaking waves, rip currents, and strong undertow.
42. **Rip Current Statement** – Issued when a high risk/threat of rip currents.
43. **Tsunami Watch** – Issued for a possible for Tsunami along coastal areas



44. **Tsunami Warning** – Issued when a tsunami with the potential to generate widespread inundation is imminent, expected, or occurring.
45. **Tsunami Advisory** – Issued when a tsunami with the potential to generate strong currents or waves dangerous to those in or very near the water in imminent, expected, or occurring.

## TROPICAL WEATHER

46. **Tropical Storm Watch** – Potential winds of 39 to 73 mph in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm along the coast.
47. **Tropical Storm Warning** – Predicted or occurring winds of 39 to 73 mph in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm along the coast.
48. **Tropical Storm Force Wind Watch** – Potential winds of 39 to 73 mph in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm inland of coast. County based alert.
49. **Tropical Storm Force Wind Warning** - Predicted or occurring winds of 39 to 73 mph in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm inland of coast. County based alert.
50. **Hurricane Watch** – Potential sustained winds 74 mph or higher in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm along the coast.
51. **Hurricane Warning** – Predicted or occurring sustained winds 74 mph or higher in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm along the coast.
52. **Hurricane Force Wind Watch** - Potential sustained winds 74 mph or higher in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm inland of coast. County based alert.
53. **Hurricane Force Wind Warning** - Predicted or occurring sustained winds 74 mph or higher in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical storm inland of coast. County based alert.
54. **Hurricane Local Statement** – Specific details about hurricane such as detailed local weather conditions, evacuation decisions, and other precautions necessary to protect life and property. County based alert.
55. **Typhoon Watch** – The term typhoon is used for Pacific tropical cyclones north of the Equator west of the international Dateline. For criteria see Hurricane Watch.
56. **Typhoon Warning** – The term typhoon is used for Pacific tropical cyclones north of the Equator west of the international Dateline. For criteria see Hurricane Warning.



57. **Typhoon [Local] Statement** – The term typhoon is used for Pacific tropical cyclones north of the Equator west of the international Dateline. For criteria see Hurricane [Local] Statement.

## NON-PRECIPIATION WEATHER

58. **Wind Advisory** – sustained non-convective (not related to thunderstorms) winds greater than 30 mph lasting for one hour or longer, or winds greater than or equal to 45 mph for any duration. County based alert.

59. **High Wind Watch** – Potential sustained non-convective (not related to thunderstorms) surface winds greater than or equal to 40 mph for at least 1 hour, or any gusts exceeding 58 mph. County based alert.

60. **High Wind Warning** – Predicted or occurring sustained surface winds exceeding 40 mph for at least 1 hour, or any gusts exceeding 58 mph. County based alert.

61. **Extreme Wind Warning** – Predicted or occurring sustained tropical storm surface winds of 115mph or greater. County based alert.

62. **Dense Fog Advisory** – Issued when fog is expected to reduce visibilities to ¼ mile or less.

63. **Frost Advisory** – Issued when nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to range from 33 F to 36 F in the growing season.

64. **Freeze Watch** – Potential nighttime minimum temperatures expected to reach 32 F or lower in the growing season. Watch is typically issued 24 - 48 hours before event.

65. **Freeze Warning** – Issued when nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to reach 32 F or lower in the growing season. They are usually issued to highlight the first few freezes of the fall, or unusually late freezes in the spring.

66. **Hard Freeze Watch** – Issued for potential sub-freezing temperatures 24 to 48 hours in advance during the growing season. Conditions will kill unprotected crops and other sensitive vegetation.

67. **Hard Freeze Warning** – Issued for imminent or highly likely sub-freezing temperatures in the growing season. Conditions will kill unprotected crops and other sensitive vegetation.

68. **Air Quality Alert** – Issued by request of the Environmental Protection Agency to inform the level/severity of poor air quality conditions.

69. **Air Stagnation Advisory** – Issued only at the request of the Environmental Protection Agency, whenever atmospheric conditions are stable enough to cause air pollutants to accumulate in a given area.



70. **Heat Advisory** – Issued when maximum daytime heat index values are expected to reach or exceed 105 F on at least 2 consecutive days, with intermediate low temperatures of 75 F or higher.
71. **Excessive Heat Watch** – Issued when maximum daytime heat index values are expected to reach or exceed 110 F on at least two consecutive days, with intermediate low temperatures of 75 F or higher issued 12 to 48 hours in the future.
72. **Excessive Heat Warning** – Issued when maximum daytime heat index values are expected to reach or exceed 110 F on at least two consecutive days, with intermediate low temperatures of 75 F or higher.
73. **Wind Chill Watch** – Favorable conditions for temperatures of -25 F or lower in 24 to 72 hours.
74. **Wind Chill Warning** – Imminent temperatures -25 F or below in 12 to 36 hours.
75. **Wind Chill Advisory** – Expected temperatures -15 F in 12 to 36 hours.
76. **Extreme Cold Watch** – Potential over 24 to 48 hours for dangerous and potentially life-threatening extreme cold temperatures expected for a prolonged period of time. Frostbite and hypothermia are likely in as short as 10 to 20 min if exposed to conditions without proper protection.
77. **Extreme Cold Warning** – Issued for immediate dangerous and potentially life-threatening extreme cold temperatures expected for a prolonged period of time. Frostbite and hypothermia are likely in as short as 10 to 20 min if exposed to conditions without proper protection. Extreme Cold Warning is issued 24 hours before conditions are possible.
78. **Volcano Warning** – A warning of current or imminent volcanic activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.
79. **Volcanic Ash Fall Advisory** – Issued for conditions associated with airborne ash plume resulting in ongoing deposition at the service.
80. **Volcanic Ash Fall Warning** – Issued for immediate threat of significant airborne ash at the surface.
81. **Blowing Dust Advisory** – Issued when blowing dust is expected to reduce visibility to between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 1 mile, generally with winds of 25 mph or greater.
82. **Dust Storm Warning** – Issued when blowing dust is expected to reduce visibility frequently to  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles or less, generally with winds of 25 mph or more.
83. **Dense Smoke Advisory** – Issued when smoke is expected to reduce visibility to  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile or less.





84. **Earthquake Warning** – Issued for imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance.

## **CIVIL EMERGENCY**

85. **Civil Emergency Message** – An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. Example, Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.

86. **Civil Danger Warning** – Present danger to a significant civilian population. A warning usually for a specific hazard accompanied with specific protective action. Examples include contaminated water supply and imminent or in-progress military or terrorist attack. Public protective actions could include evacuation, shelter in place, or other actions.

87. **Evacuation Immediate** – A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local ordinance. Example, authorized officials may recommend the evacuation of affected areas due to an approaching tropical cyclone or explosive gas release.

88. **911 Telephone Outage** – An emergency message that defines a local or state 911-telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange.

89. **Hazardous Materials Warning** – A warning of the release of non-radioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that may recommend evacuation (for an explosion, fire, or oil spill hazard) or shelter in place (for a toxic fume hazard).

90. **Child Abduction Emergency (Amber Alert)** – Emergency message about missing child believe to be abducted.

91. **Law Enforcement Warning** – A warning of bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g. a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

92. **Local Area Emergency** – An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Authorized officials may provide instructions, other than public protective actions. Examples include: a disruption in water, electric or natural gas services, road closures due to excessive snowfall, or potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.



93. **Nuclear Power Plant Warning** – A warning of an event at a nuclear power plant classified such as a Site Area Emergency or General Emergency as classified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. A Site Area Emergency is confined to the plant site; no off-site impact is expected. Typically, a General Emergency is confined to an area less than a 10-mile radius around the plant. Authorized officials may recommend evacuation or medical treatment of exposed persons in nearby areas.
94. **Radiological Hazard Warning** – A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of radiological hazard. Examples include: the theft of radioactive isotope used for medical, seismic, or other purposes; the delivery of radioactive materials; a transportation (aircraft, truck or rail, etc.) accident that may involve nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, or radioactive wastes. Authorized officials may recommend protective action to be taken if a radioactive hazard is discovered.
95. **Shelter In Place Warning** – A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information). An example is the release of hazardous materials where toxic fumes or radioactivity may affect designated areas.

\*\*\* Definitions represent most common criteria across the U.S., criteria may vary by location

<http://iAlert.com/docs/iAlert.com-All-Hazards-Reference-Guide.pdf>

