

Advanced SKYWARN Spotter Class

Klint Skelly - Warning Coordination Meteorologist
NWS - Pueblo, Colorado



Why we need Spotters

- Add credibility to hazards
- Enhance public response
- Improve warning accuracy
- Radar limitations – Spotters provide ground truth
- Weak tornadoes are very difficult to detect using radar

A Few Housekeeping Items

- We no longer issue spotter ID's
- Use number on hail card to call in reports, which tells us you are a trained spotter
- Go to www.weather.gov/pub/spotters and enter password, given at end of class, to download and print your official training certificate

Outline

About Us



**Overview of
Weather
Hazards &
Safety**



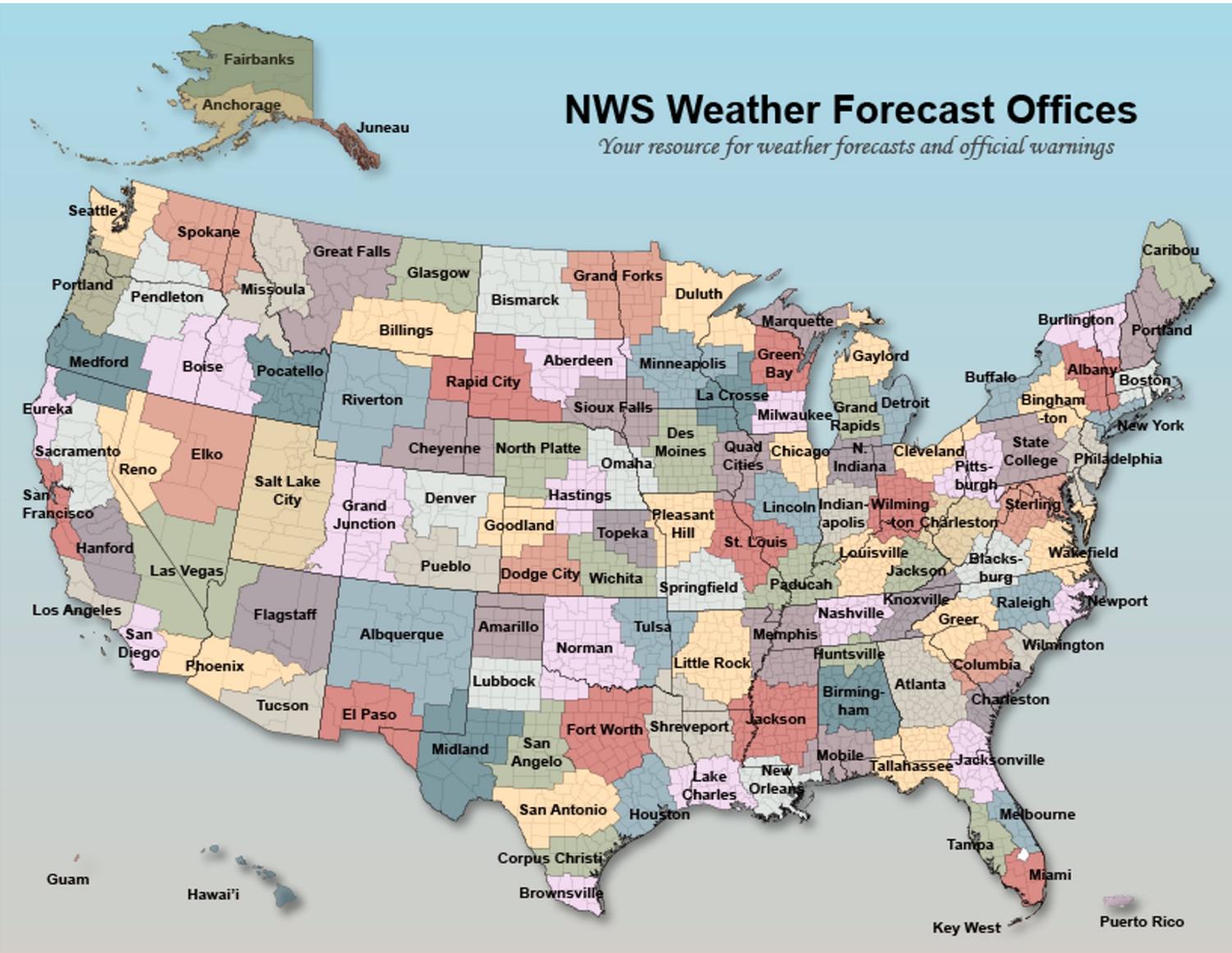
**Reporting
Overview**



**Spotting
Simulation**

NWS Weather Forecast Offices

Your resource for weather forecasts and official warnings

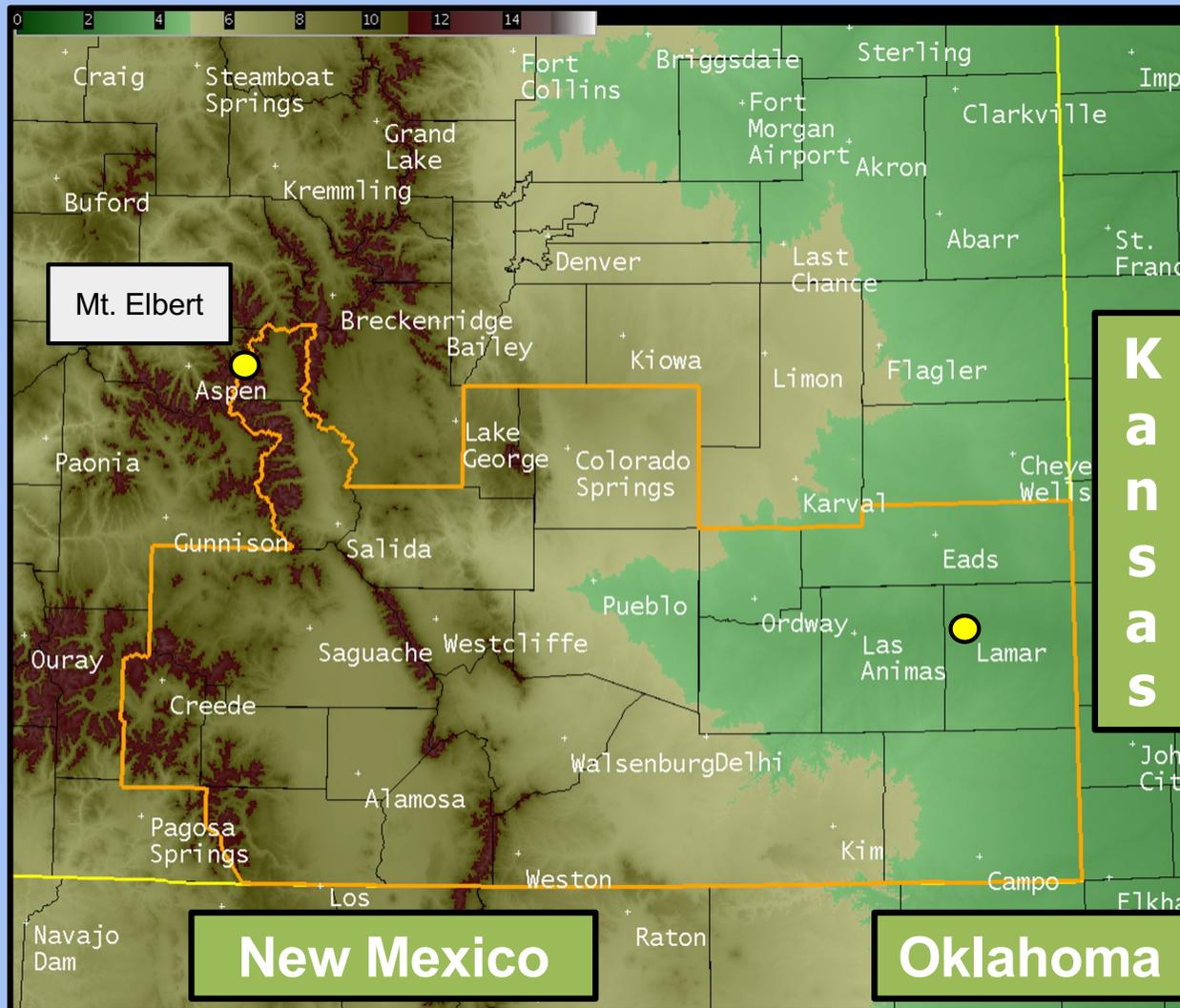


122

Weather Forecast
Offices (WFOs)

13 River Forecast
Centers (RFCs)

6 Major Regions
Eastern, Southern,
Central, Western,
Alaska, and Pacific
Regions



A Closer Look at Pueblo's Area of Responsibility

- **Lamar, Colorado**
 - 3,619'
 - Second lowest point in CO
- **Mount Elbert**
 - 14,439'
 - Highest point in CO
- We get all modes of weather... besides tropical

Who We Are

- 1 Meteorologist in Charge
- 1 Warning Coordination Meteorologist
- 1 Science Operations Officer
- 1 Administrative Support Assistant
- 1 Information Technology Officer
- 1 Electronic Systems Analyst
- 1 Observation Program Leader
- 1 Service Hydrologist
- 6 Lead Forecasters
- 6 General Forecasters
- 2 Electronic Technicians



What We Do

Keep a continuous weather watch 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

At least two meteorologists on each shift, 8AM-4PM, 4PM-12AM, and 12AM-8AM.

Issue warnings for Tornadoes, Severe Storms, Floods, Winter Storms & other hazards.



Doppler Weather Radar

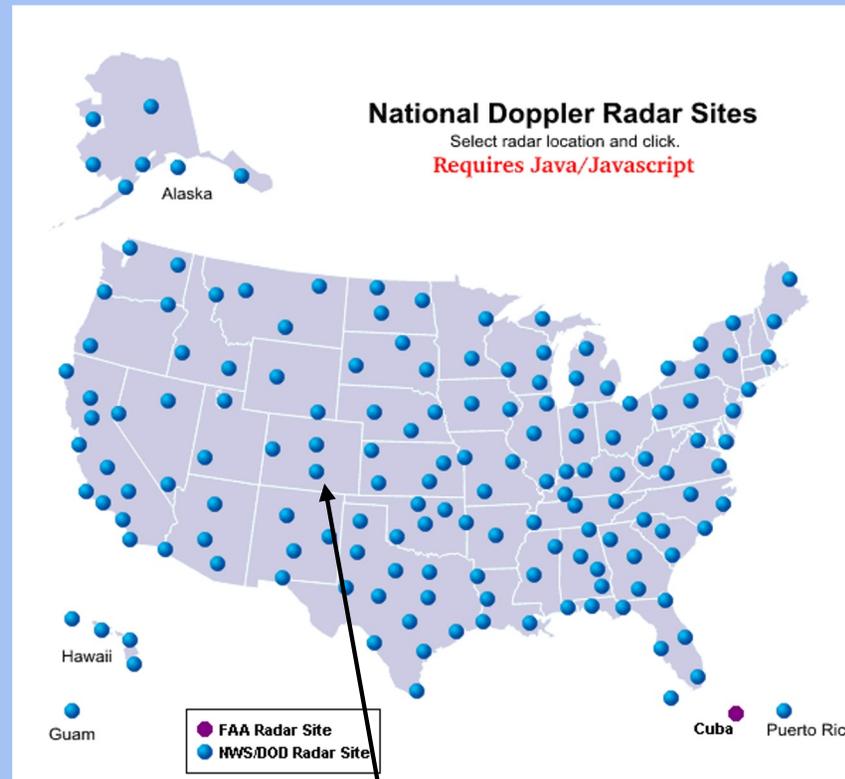
155 NEXRAD Radars Nationwide

Operate 24/7/365

Only detect rain/aerosol particles in the atmosphere, not the ground.

During severe weather, new scans update every 1-2 minutes.

Amazing technology but still need ground truth.



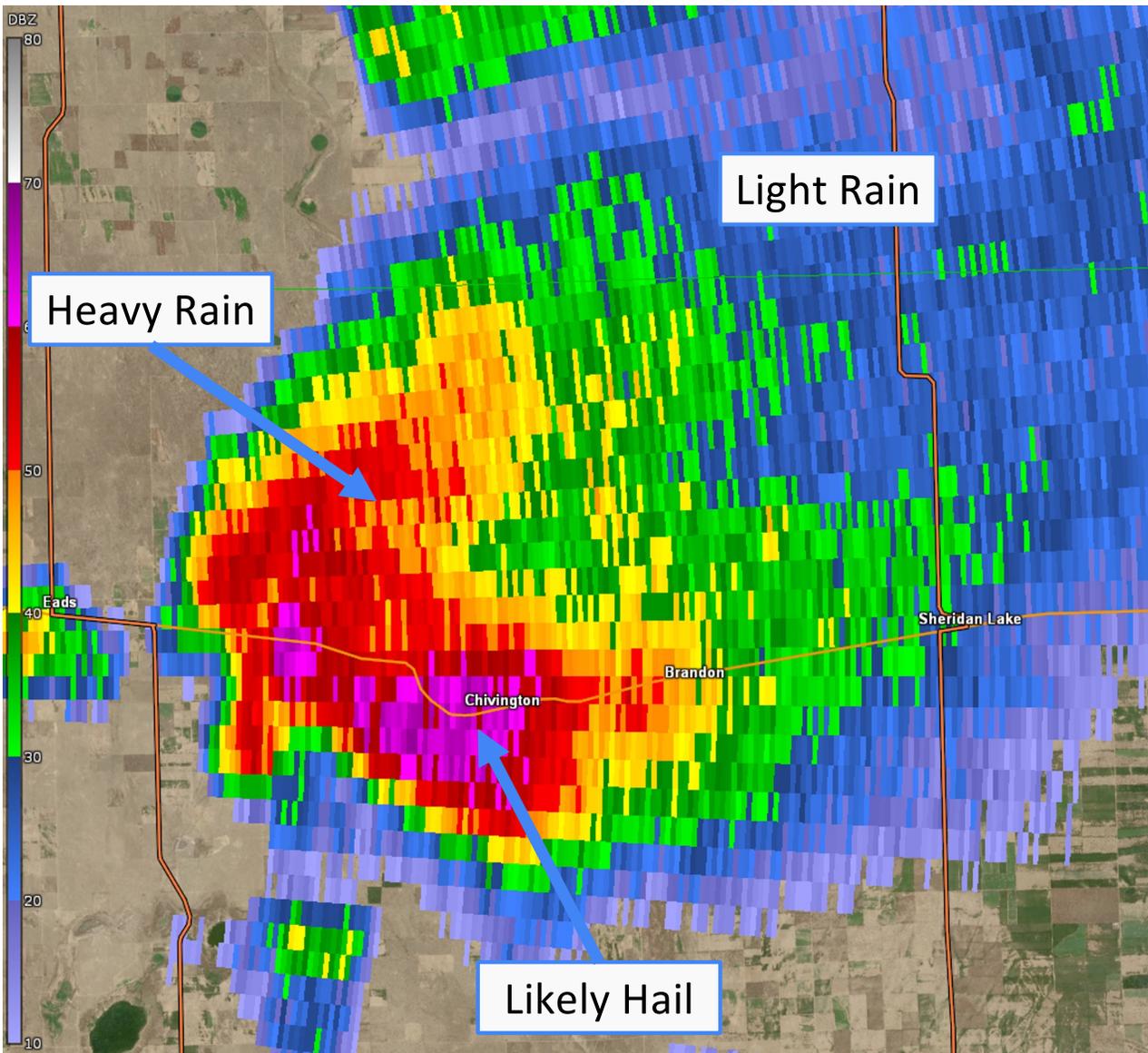
Our radar: kpux



Base Reflectivity

Shows energy returned to radar

Higher reflectivity from heavy rain/hail

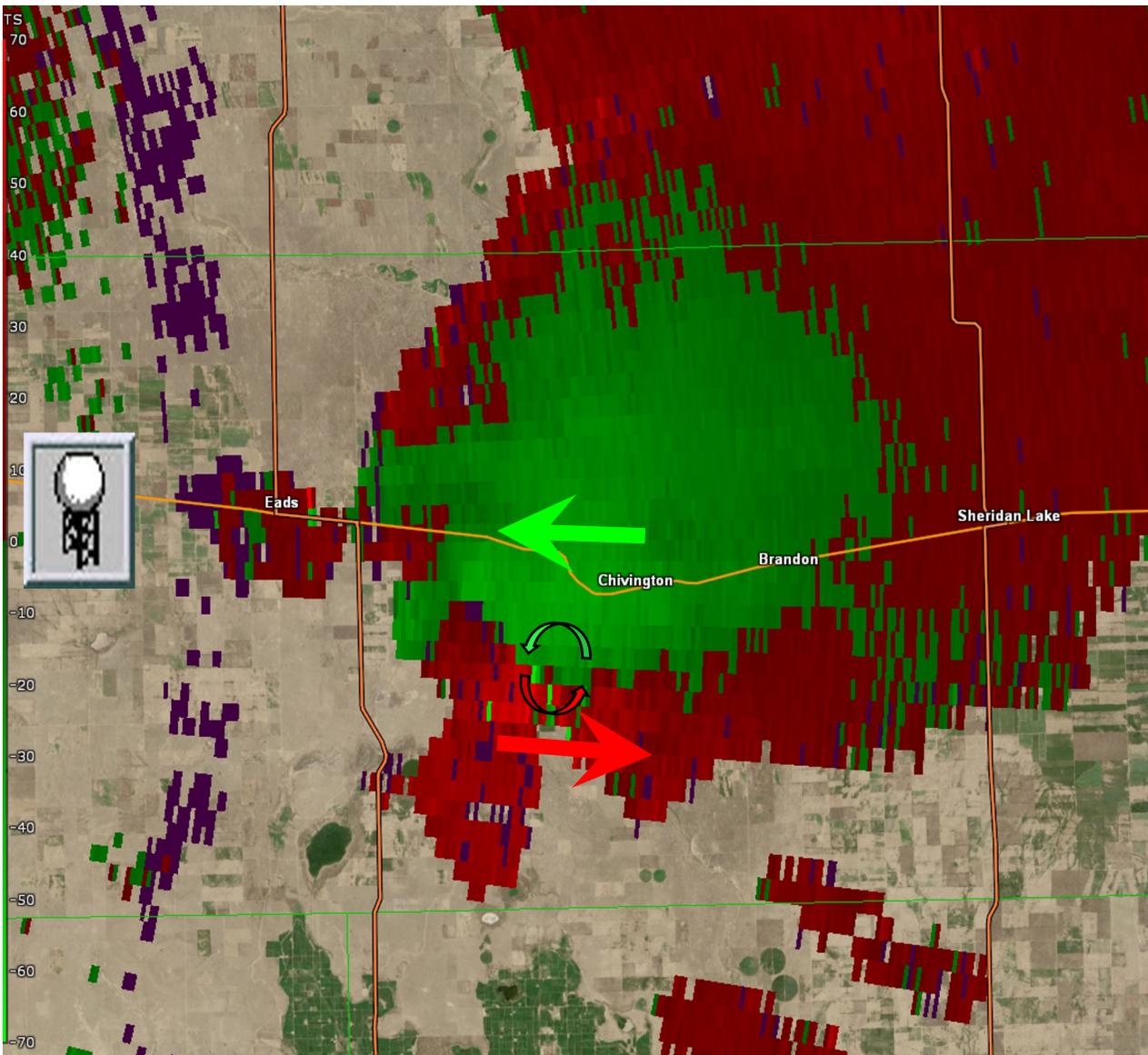


Base Velocity

Product that puts the “Doppler” in Doppler Radar

One dimensional velocity: Motion toward or away from radar

Motion away from the radar in **RED** and motion toward the radar in **GREEN**

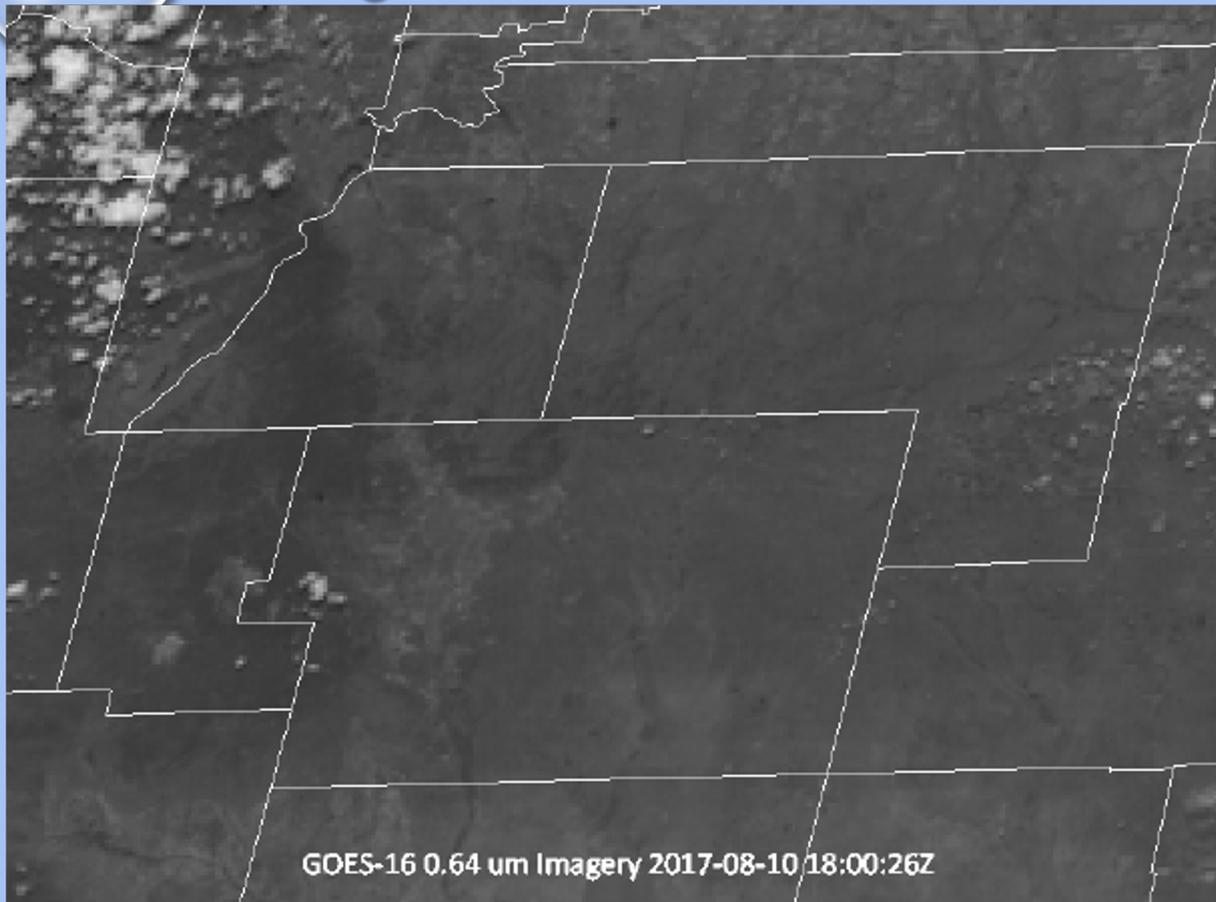


Satellite Imagery

Use to monitor for thunderstorms, wildfires, smoke, fog, snow

Several products to aid in determining different hazards

Updated every 5 minutes, but can be as rapidly as 1-2 minutes



Weather Hazards Overview

Southern CO Weather Hazards

Severe Thunderstorms & Tornadoes

Wildfires

Flash Floods & River Floods

Winter Storms

Hail

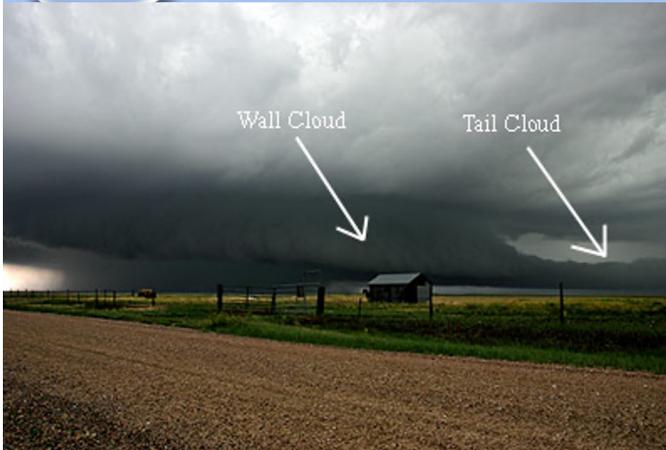
Most common severe storm threat in CO

Typically falls away from updraft, but not always

Can range in size from $< \frac{1}{4}$ " to several inches in diameter



Wall Clouds



The “action” area of the storm

Area of strongest updraft or lift

Rain-free base

Where tornadoes normally develop

May be accompanied by a tail cloud in very moist environments

May not be visible in HP storms

Not ALL wall clouds rotate



Tornadoes



Rapidly rotating column of air extending from a cloud that **IN CONTACT** with the ground.

The air is the tornado, not the condensation funnel.



Damaging Winds

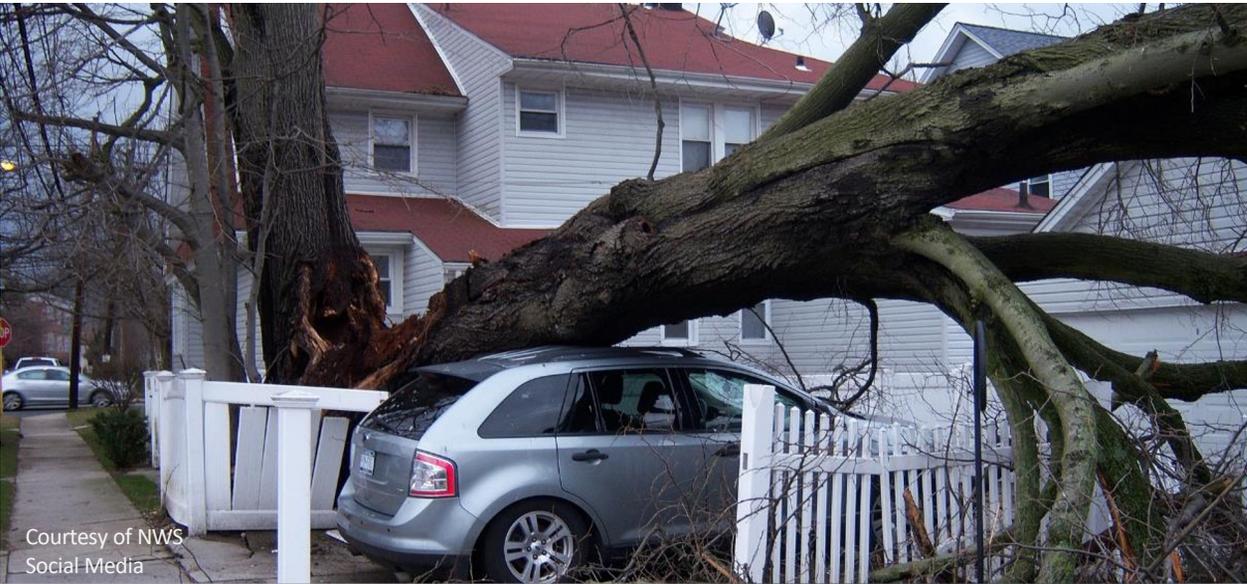
Sometimes referred to as
“straight-line winds”

Winds not associated with a
tornado

Can exceed 100 mph

Can cause extensive damage

Shelf cloud usually a good
indicator of strong winds



Courtesy of NWS
Social Media



Flash Flooding

Rapid rise in water in a manner of a few hours or less

Burn scars are especially susceptible

Can cause extensive damage

Just 12" of water can cause vehicles to float



Photo Credit:
NPS Photo/Cullen Kirk

Safety Overview



Lightning Safety

One bolt measures
50,000° F

Usually strikes the
tallest object

Can strike the same
place over and over

Can strike several
miles away from
storm



When  Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!

STOP all activities.

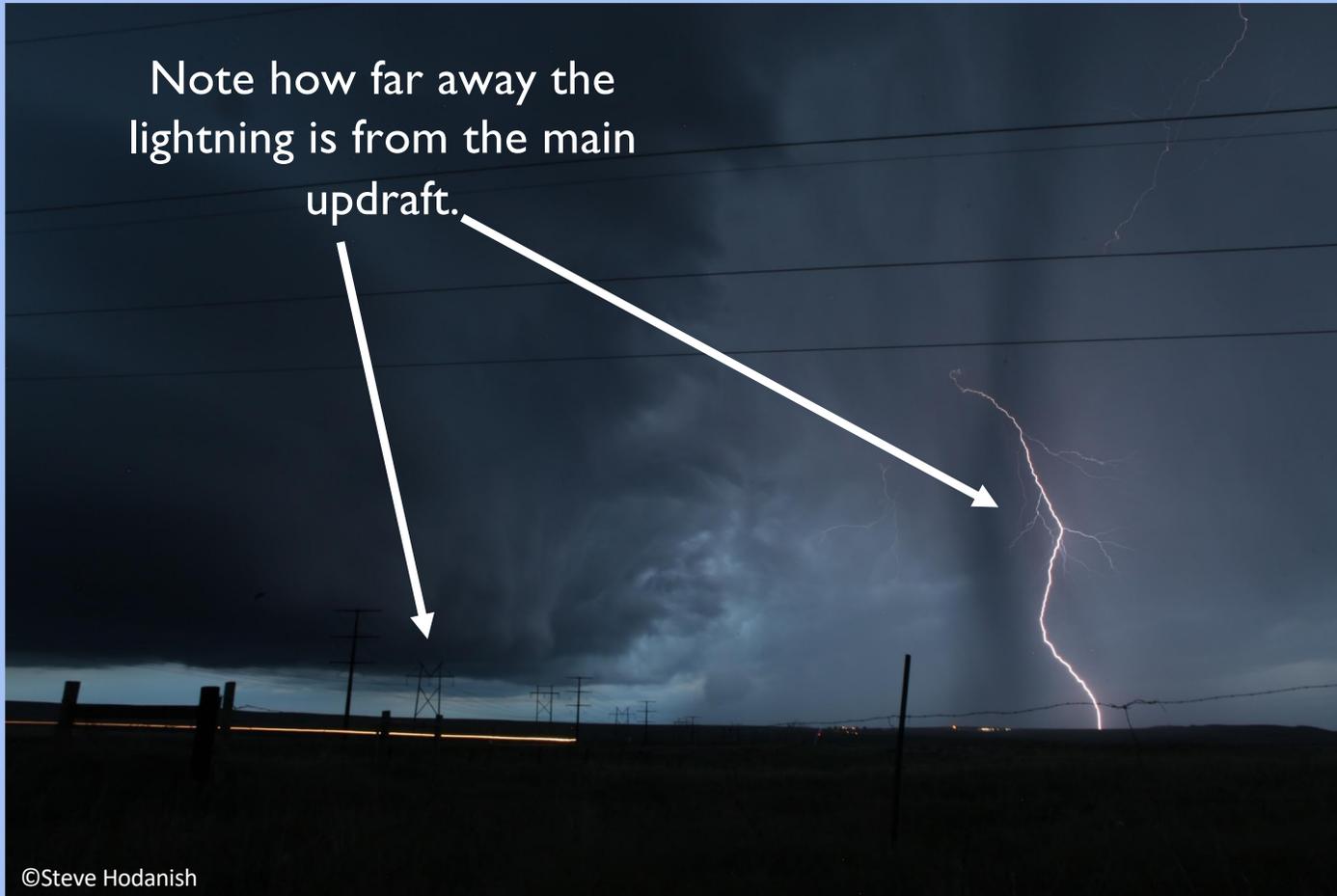
Seek shelter in a substantial building or hard-topped vehicle.

Wait 30 minutes after the storm to resume activities.

 www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov 

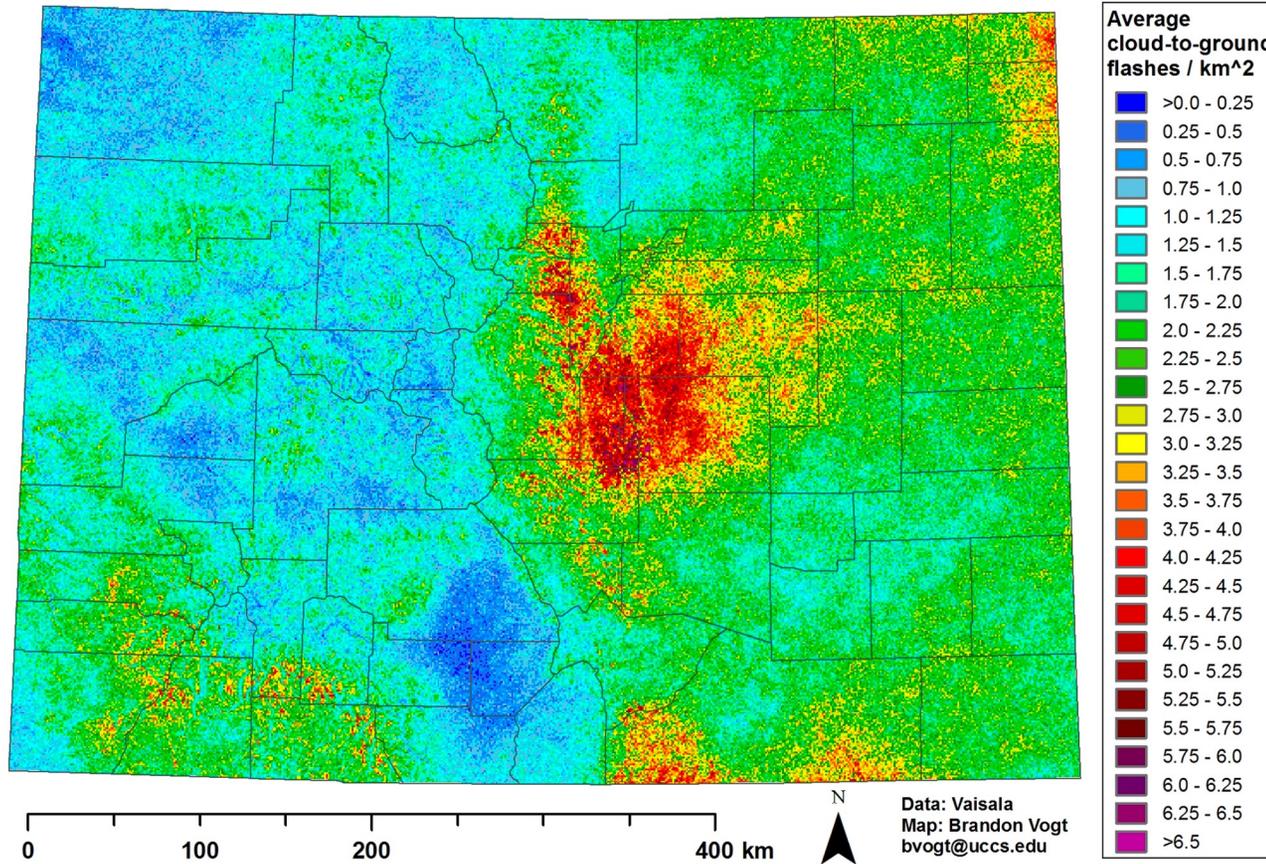
Lightning Safety

Note how far away the lightning is from the main updraft.



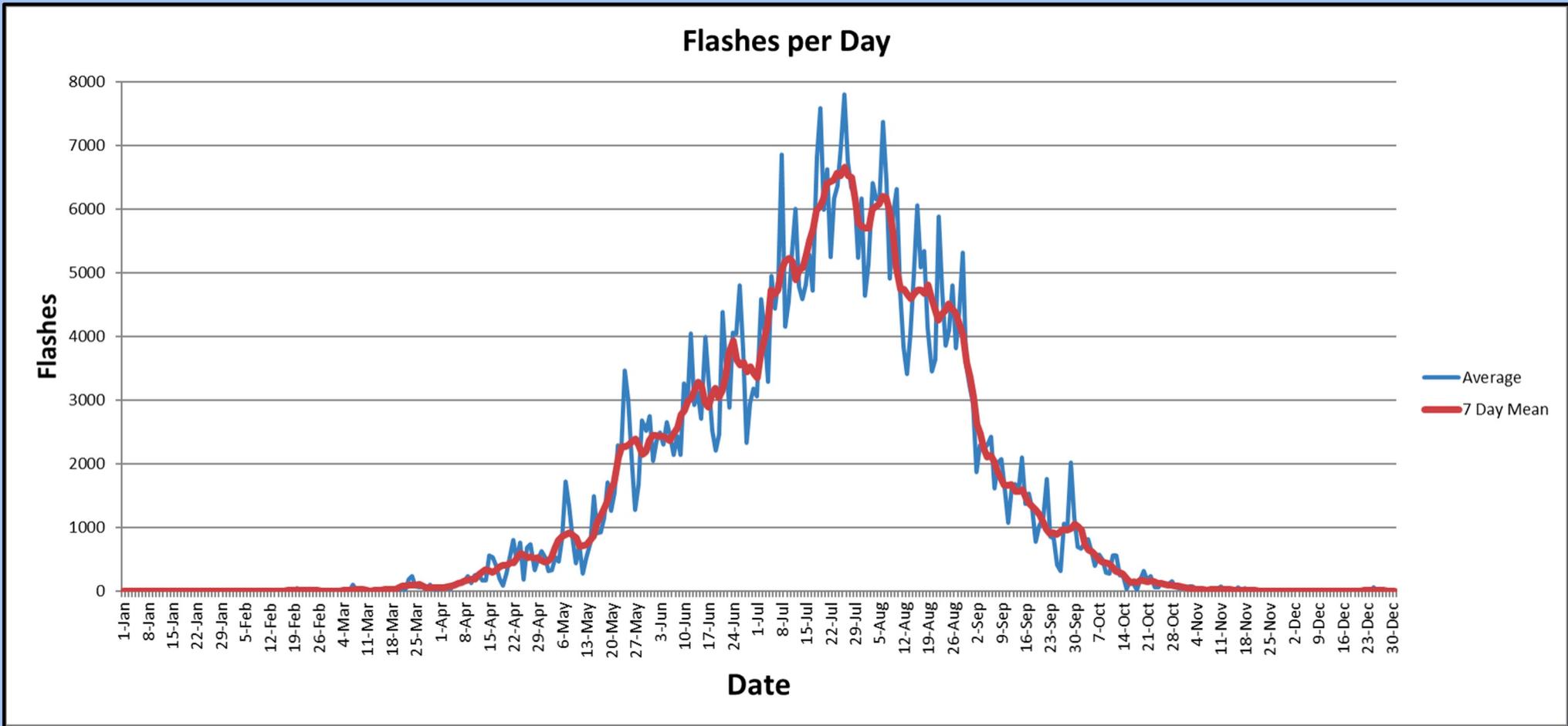
©Steve Hodanish

Colorado Lightning 1996 - 2016: Annual



What Areas Stand Out?

Lightning Flashes Climatology throughout the Year



Time of Day Lightning Climatology

	HR (z)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Morning	12z	0.1	0.1	0.3	1.6	5.0	9.6	5.6	19.8	13.0	3.9	0.1	0
	13z	0	0.1	0.3	1.4	4.8	9.1	3.8	16.6	13.6	2.9	0.1	0
	14z	0	0	0.3	1.3	5.1	6.7	3.6	12.9	14.4	3.0	0.1	0
	15z	0	0	0.1	1.6	5.7	6.8	3.3	12.9	14.5	4.3	0.1	0
	16z	0	0	0.1	2.5	11.0	14.1	8.2	14.9	14.9	4.4	0.1	0
	17z	0	0	0.4	4.8	27.7	46.0	39.3	45.3	24.9	5.6	0.4	0
Afternoon	18z	0	0.1	1.3	10.3	60.7	114.4	130.8	138.5	54.9	8.2	0.5	0
	19z	0	0.3	2.9	16.4	97.2	187.3	272.9	272.4	96.3	12.8	0.9	0
	20z	0	0.5	4.7	21.8	132.4	239.4	396.1	377.4	137.2	15.5	0.9	0
	21z	0	0.7	5.2	25.5	146.6	286.5	479.3	464.3	150.3	20.9	0.9	0.1
	22z	0	0.6	5.8	25.7	151.7	300.9	523.0	521.2	165.9	22.9	0.9	0.1
	23z	0.1	0.6	5.4	22.2	136.2	298.8	505.0	521.5	154.9	21.7	1.0	0
Evening	00z	0.1	0.3	3.8	21.2	105.7	278.0	433.5	486.5	146.3	25.7	0.7	0.1
	01z	0	0.2	2.3	17.5	87.8	223.9	358.1	388.4	112.6	21.8	0.7	0.1
	02z	0.1	0.1	1.4	11.5	66.9	166.7	279.5	286.9	87.9	20.2	1.0	0
	03z	0	0.1	0.9	8.4	51.4	117.3	198.2	195.4	66.7	13.3	0.9	0.1
	04z	0.1	0.1	0.8	7.3	34.8	84.0	144.3	134.0	51.1	11.3	0.6	0
	05z	0.1	0.1	0.6	7.2	22.3	64.7	91.1	91.4	37.4	10.9	0.4	0
Overnight	06z	0.1	0	0.6	5.4	15.7	51.7	59.9	65.1	26.4	7.4	0.1	0
	07z	0.4	0	0.4	3.1	11.4	39.3	36.1	48.4	19.5	5.6	0.2	0
	08z	0.1	0	0.4	2.3	8.4	27.9	26.3	35.7	15.6	5.8	0.2	0
	09z	0.1	0	0.6	2.0	5.6	19.5	16.2	27.5	14.2	4.4	0.1	0
	10z	0.1	0	0.5	1.7	5.1	15.7	12.1	19.9	12.4	4.3	0.2	0
	11z	0	0.1	0.2	1.8	4.2	12.8	8.6	18.5	11.8	4.4	0.2	0

Tornado & Severe Storm Safety



Tornado & Severe Storm Safety

Tornado Sheltering Guidelines

Seek the best available refuge area **immediately** when a Tornado Warning is issued.
Your chance of surviving a tornado is excellent if you follow these guidelines.

WORST OPTIONS

Mobile homes
Vehicles
Underneath a
highway overpass

BAD OPTIONS

Large open rooms
like gymnasiums
Manufactured housing

GOOD OPTIONS

Interior room
of a well-constructed
home or building
Basement

BEST OPTIONS

Above or below ground
Tornado Storm Shelter
(NSSA/ICC 500 compliant)*
Specifically-designed
FEMA Safe Room*

Find another option



Stay in place until all clear

PHOTO: U.S. Air Force - Tech. Sgt. Bradley C. Church

*Recommended by FEMA



Tornado & Severe Storm Safety

Know Where to Go

When Sheltering from a Tornado



Top floor rooms
DO NOT protect you.

If you have no basement,
move to an interior room
with no windows.

Exterior rooms and rooms with
windows DO NOT protect you.

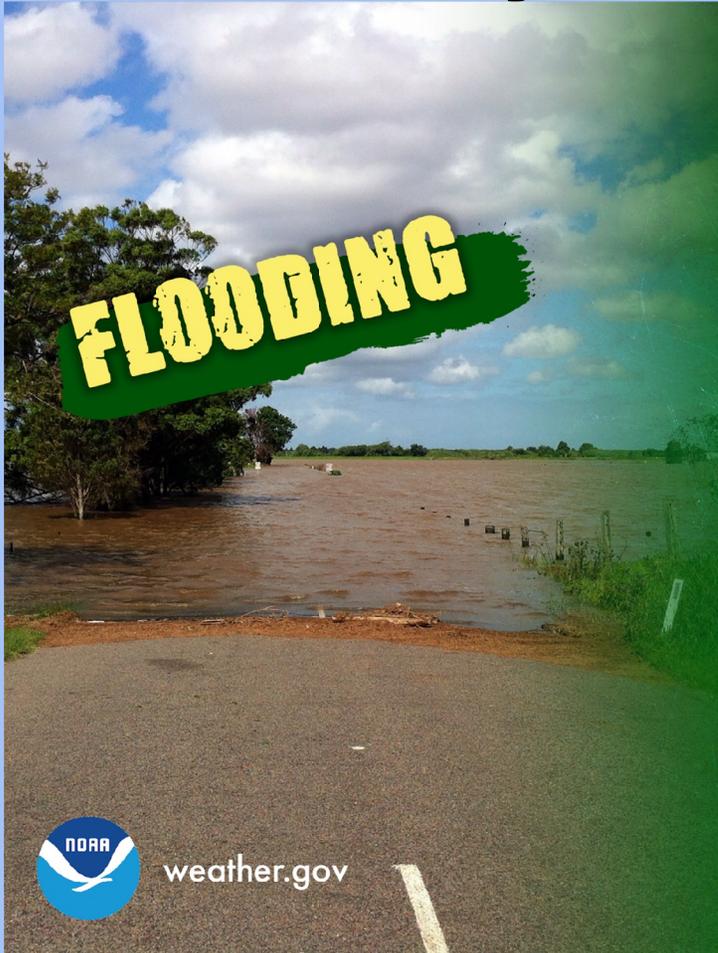
NO PLACE OUTSIDE
is safe from a tornado.

Quickly move to your
basement and bring your
emergency supply kit.



weather.gov/safety/tornado

Flood Safety



Small Decisions can have a
BIG IMPACT.

- Turn around and don't drive through a flooded roadway
- Don't drive around barricades
- Delay travel until conditions improve

Don't let a bad decision be your last.

Flood Safety

Never cross
flooded
roadways...



Flood Safety

...because it could be like this underneath.



© Tom Magnuson

Wildfire Safety



Question: What 3 ingredients do you need to start a fire?

1. Fuel
2. Oxygen
3. Ignition

How does a spark become a wildfire?

Or: how do fires spread?

Usually winds or embers, or a combination of the two

Here's the hard part: fires spread as fast as the winds can blow, and change direction with it.

How do you think the mountains make things worse here?



What we do we do about it?

- The National Weather Service has a special product for what we call Critical Fire Weather – The Red Flag Warning
 - ‘Critical Fire Weather Conditions’ need three things: What are they?
- Dry fuels
- Low Relative Humidity (<15 percent)
- Strong Winds (>25mph)
- Last two for at least 3 hours

Red Flag Warning

The NWS issues a Red Flag Warning, in conjunction with land management agencies, to alert people to an ongoing or expected critical fire weather pattern.

Critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now, or will shortly.

Be extremely careful with open flames.



weather.gov/safety/wildfire

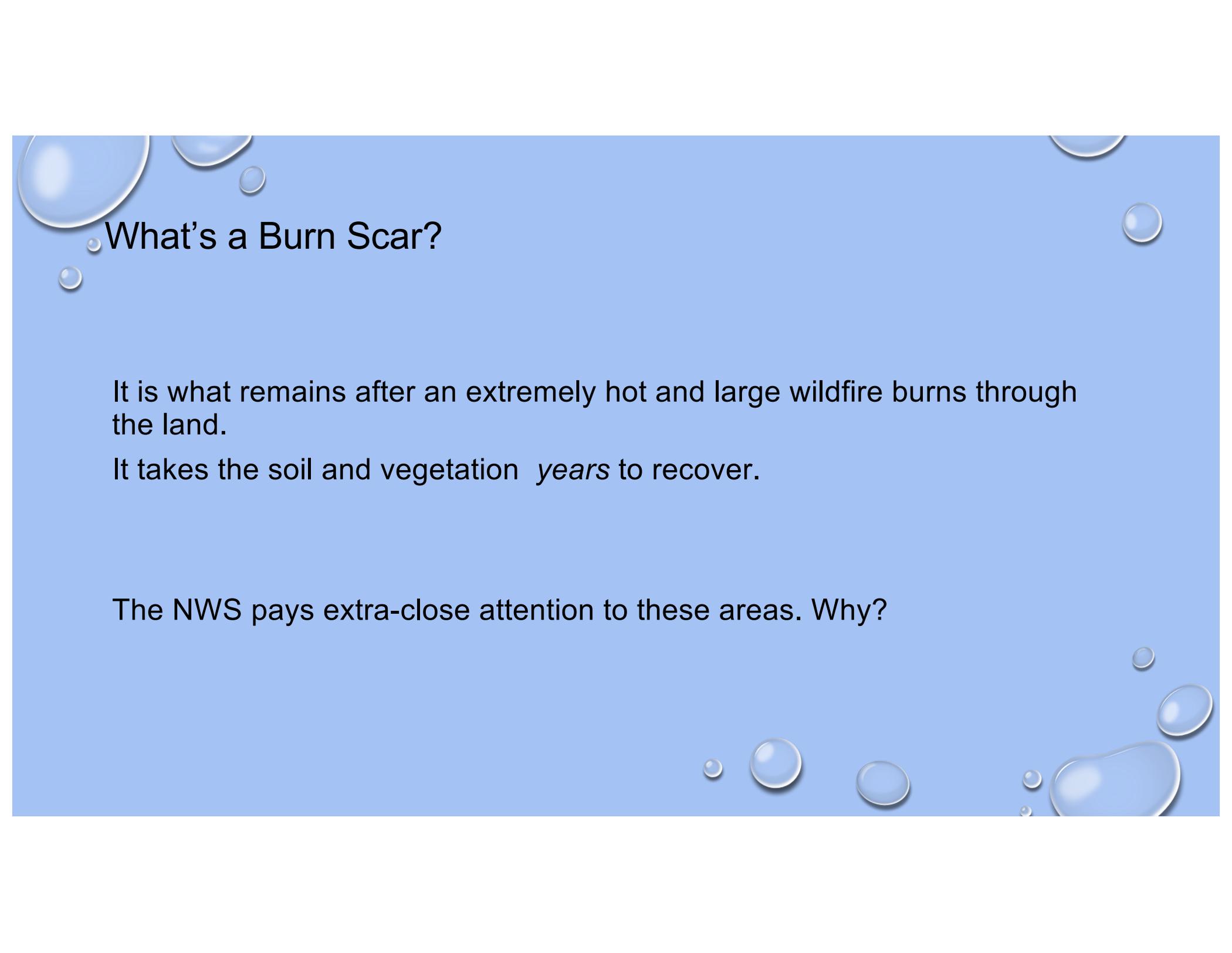
Take action.

Worst-case (Waldo and Marshall fires)



Recovery-burn scars



The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic-looking water droplets of various sizes, scattered across the top and bottom edges. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

What's a Burn Scar?

It is what remains after an extremely hot and large wildfire burns through the land.

It takes the soil and vegetation *years* to recover.

The NWS pays extra-close attention to these areas. Why?

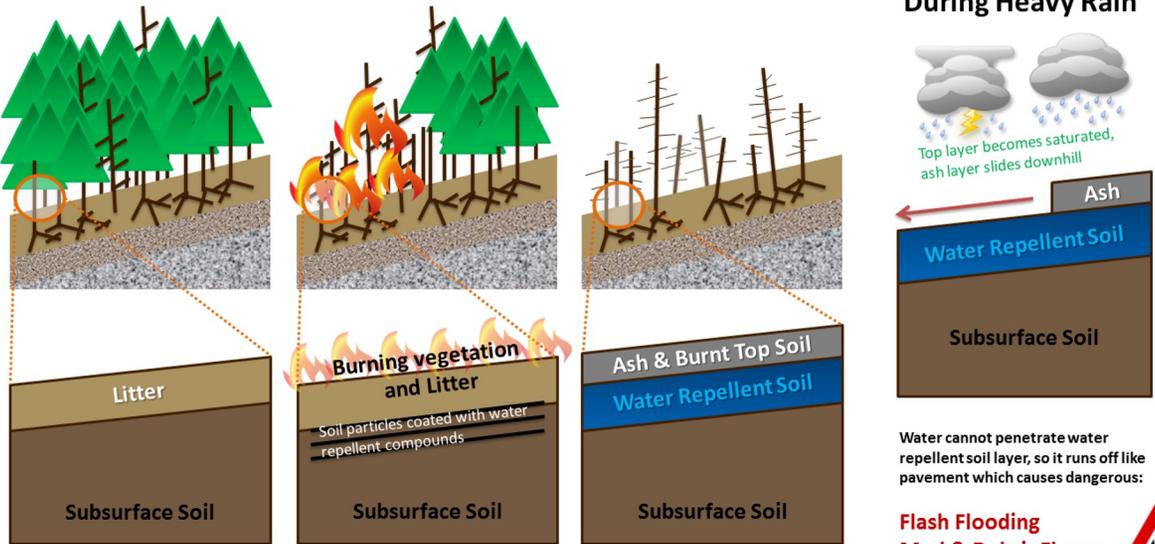
One thing leads to another...

- Burn scars lead to other hazards, like flash-flooding and debris flow!



Wildfire Burn Scars are a Flood Risk

Before Fire **During Fire** **After Fire** **During Heavy Rain**



Before Fire: Litter layer above Subsurface Soil.

During Fire: Burning vegetation and Litter. Soil particles coated with water repellent compounds.

After Fire: Ash & Burnt Top Soil layer above Water Repellent Soil layer, which is above Subsurface Soil.

During Heavy Rain: Top layer becomes saturated, ash layer slides downhill. Water cannot penetrate water repellent soil layer, so it runs off like pavement which causes dangerous:

Flash Flooding
Mud & Debris Flows
Mudslides



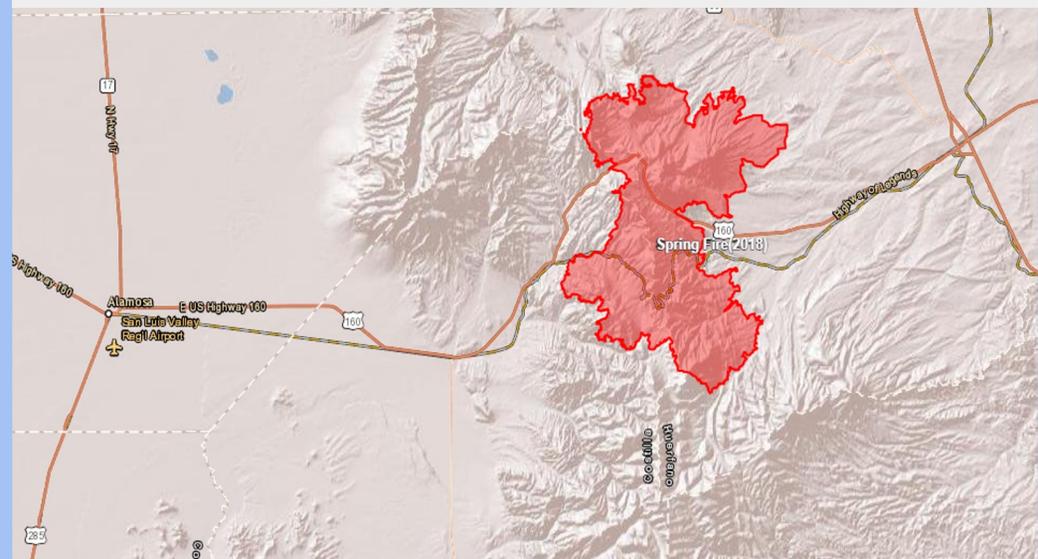
Litter: organic material such as needles, leaves, grass, brush, bark.
Water Repellent Soils: formed when organic material such as trees, scrubs, plants and litter burn at high intensity, water repellent compounds are vaporized, and condense on cooler soil layers below, which prevents soil from absorbing water.

NWS PUB's Burn Scars

Decker Fire



Spring Creek Fire



Snow Squalls and Blizzards



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SNOW SQUALLS

WWW.WEATHER.GOV/SAFETY



WHAT ARE THEY?

Quick intense bursts of snow
Accompanied by strong gusty winds
Short-lived, typically less than 3 hours
Normally occur during the day

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

Rapidly reduced visibility
Treacherous travel conditions
Potential for chain-reaction accidents



WHAT'S A SNOW SQUALL WARNING?

Warning is usually 30-60 minutes in length
Issued for small areas where snow squalls are expected
Similar to a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning

HOW CAN YOU STAY SAFE?

Have a way to get forecasts and warnings
Consider an alternate route or delaying travel
Stay alert for rapidly changing road conditions
Reduce speed and use low beam headlights



WEATHER.GOV

SNOW SQUALLS

Snow squalls are intense, but limited duration, periods of moderate to heavy snowfall, accompanied by gusty surface winds resulting in reduced visibilities and whiteout conditions.

Rapidly falling temperatures in conjunction with the snow can cause dangerous impacts to surface transportation.

For more information visit weather.gov



WHAT'S A BLIZZARD?

WEATHER.GOV/WINTER



 BLOWING SNOW

35+ MPH WINDS



 $\leq 1/4$ MI VISIBILITY

FOR 3+ HOURS



DID YOU KNOW THAT
FALLING SNOW
ISN'T NECESSARY
FOR A BLIZZARD?

A BLIZZARD THAT RESULTS FROM SNOW
THAT HAS PREVIOUSLY FALLEN
IS CALLED A GROUND BLIZZARD.

Emergency Alerts & Wireless emergency alerts

Severe Thunderstorm Warnings

& Impact-based warning tags

Damage Threat Tag	Wind	Hail	WEA?
Base (No tag)	58 mph (60 mph in warning)	1.00 inch (quarter)	NO
Considerable	70 mph	1.75 inch (golfball)	NO
Destructive	80 mph	2.75 inch (baseball)	YES

HAIL THREAT...RADAR INDICATED
 MAX HAIL SIZE...1.00 IN
 WIND THREAT...RADAR INDICATED
 MAX WIND GUST...60 MPH

THUNDERSTORM DAMAGE THREAT...CONSIDERABLE
 HAIL THREAT...OBSERVED
 MAX HAIL SIZE...1.75 IN
 WIND THREAT...RADAR INDICATED
 MAX WIND GUST...70 MPH

TORNADO...POSSIBLE
 THUNDERSTORM DAMAGE THREAT...DESTRUCTIVE
 HAIL THREAT...OBSERVED
 MAX HAIL SIZE...2.75 IN
 WIND THREAT...OBSERVED
 MAX WIND GUST...80 MPH

IPAWS - WEA, NWR & EAS

- WEA process is fully automated

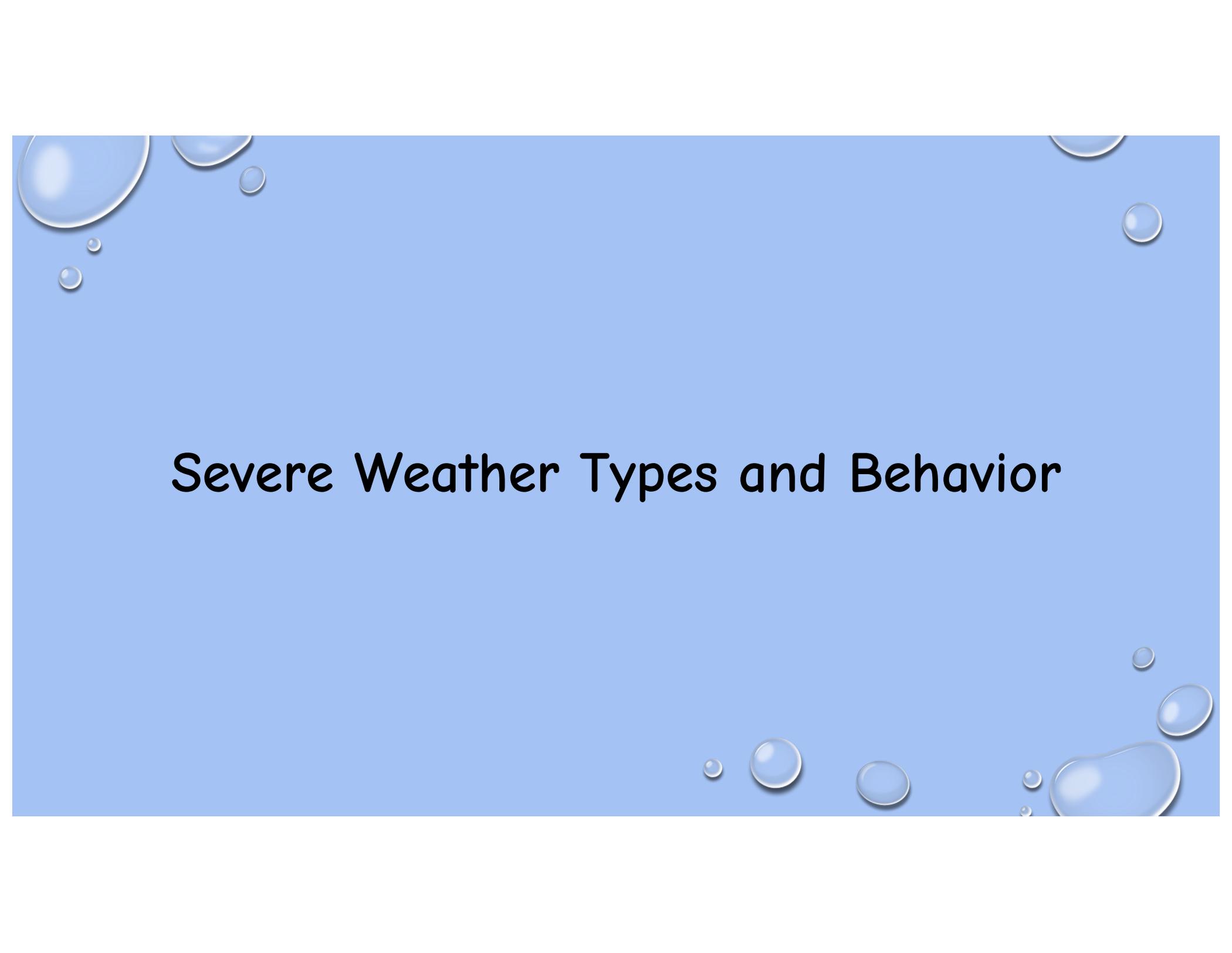
Standard messages for each warning type

NWS WEA



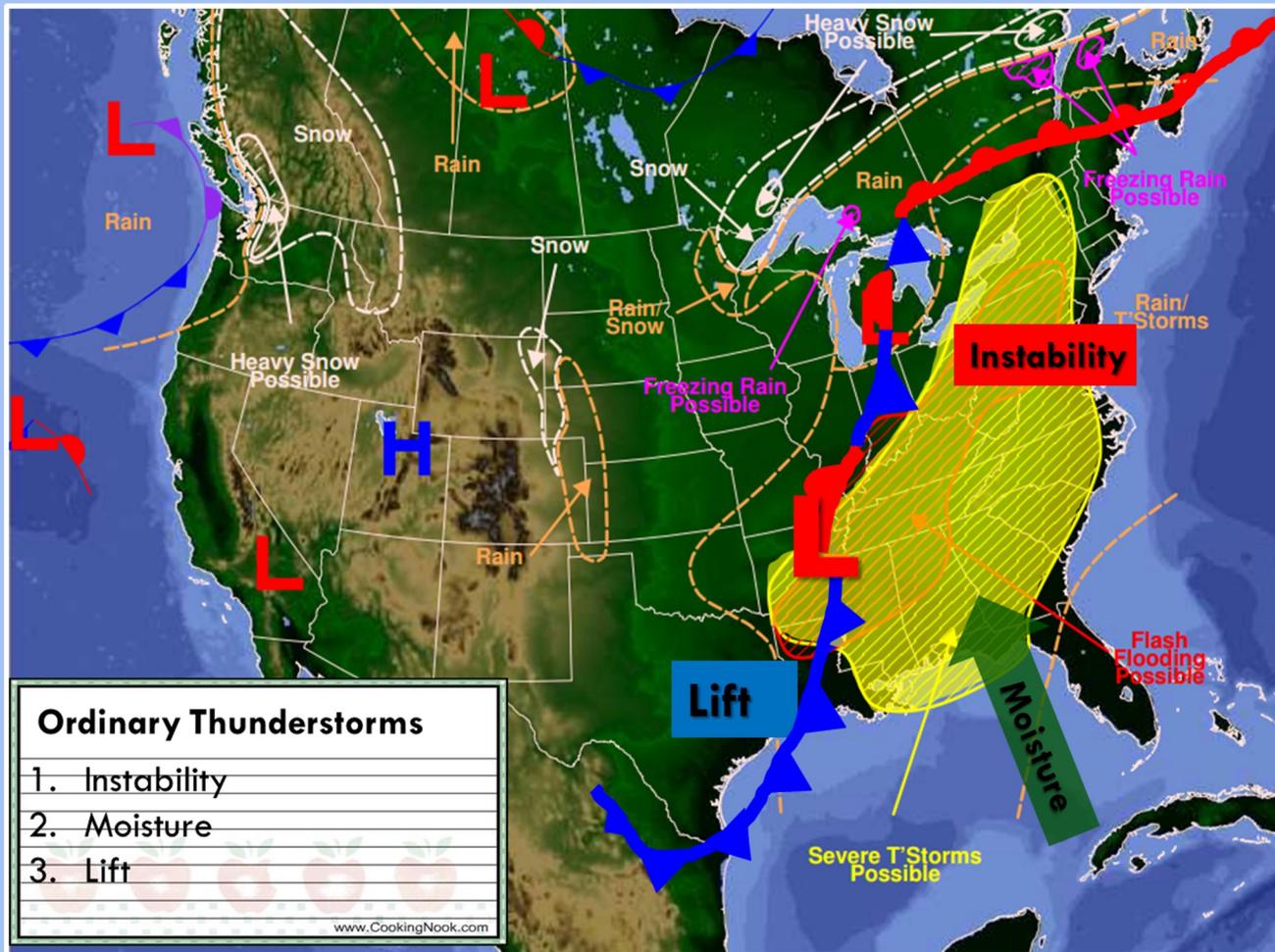
WEA 360 language



The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic-looking water droplets of various sizes, scattered primarily in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

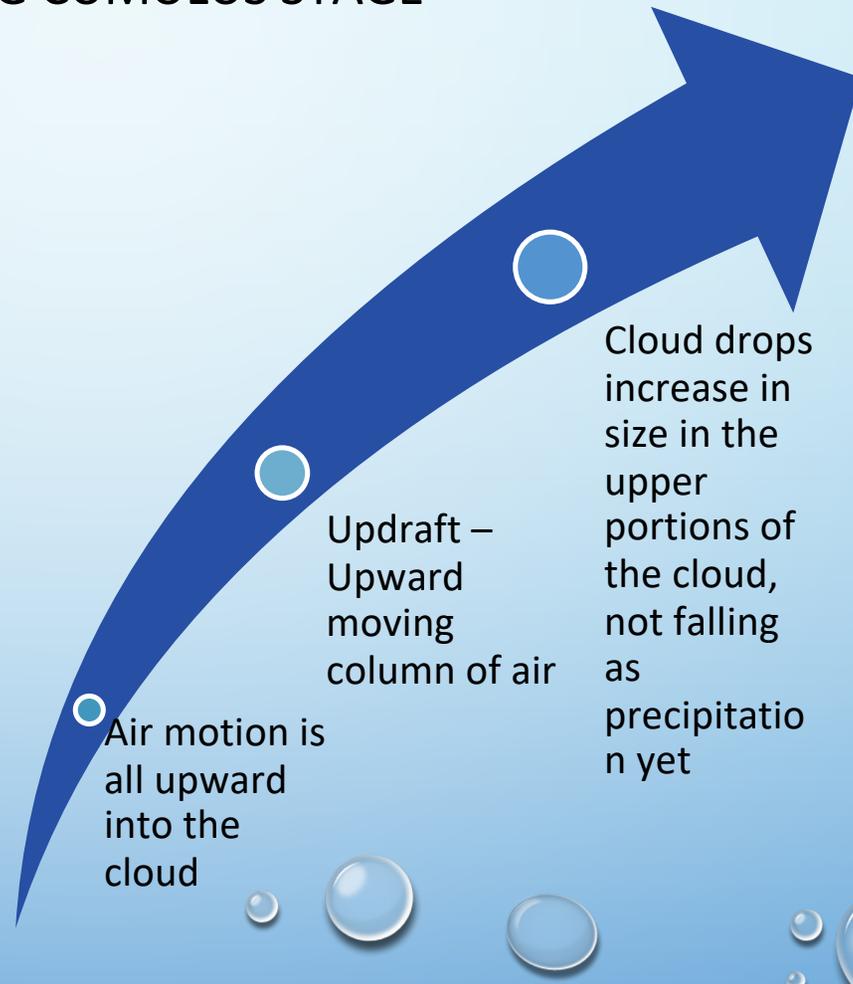
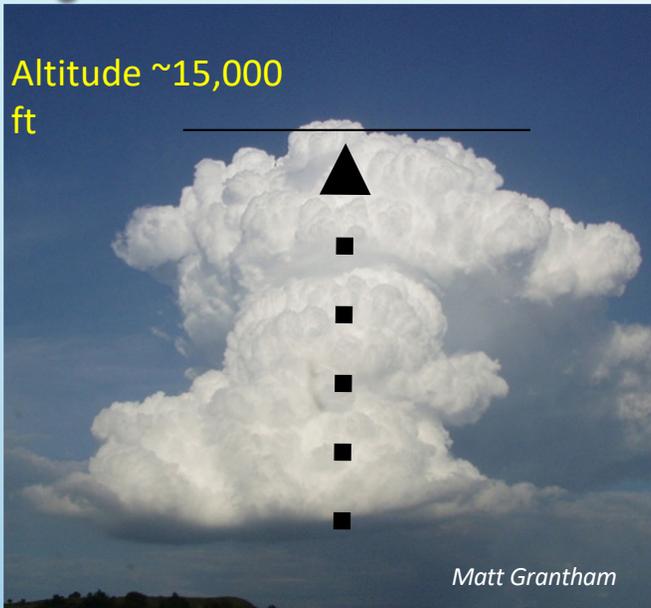
Severe Weather Types and Behavior

Question: What ingredients do we need for an 'ordinary' thunderstorm?



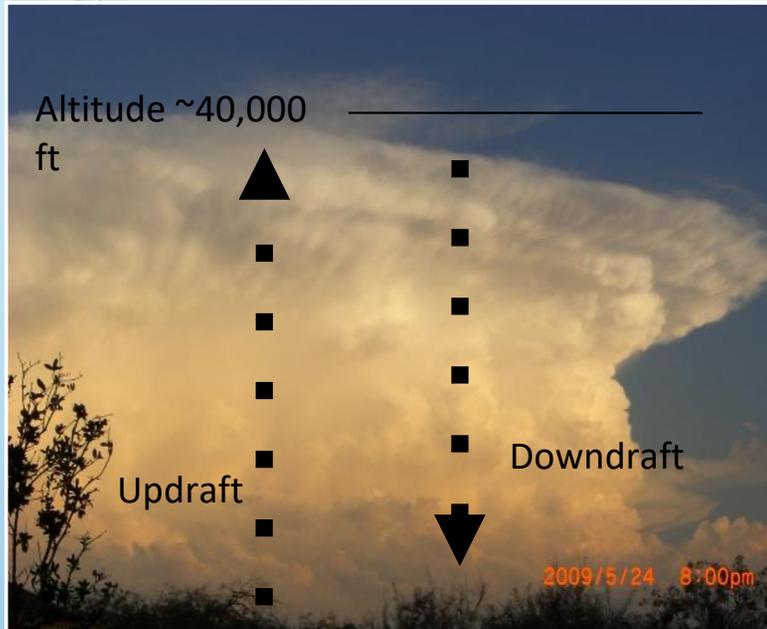
ORDINARY THUNDERSTORM LIFECYCLE

TOWERING CUMULUS STAGE

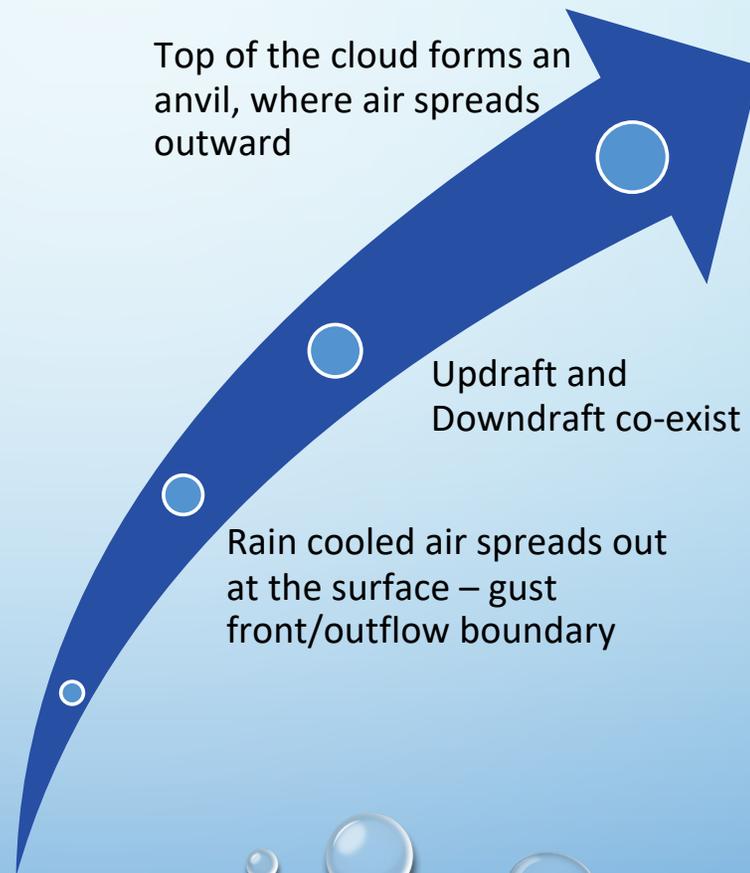


ORDINARY THUNDERSTORM LIFECYCLE

MATURE STAGE



Downdraft – Rain and hail now falling back to ground



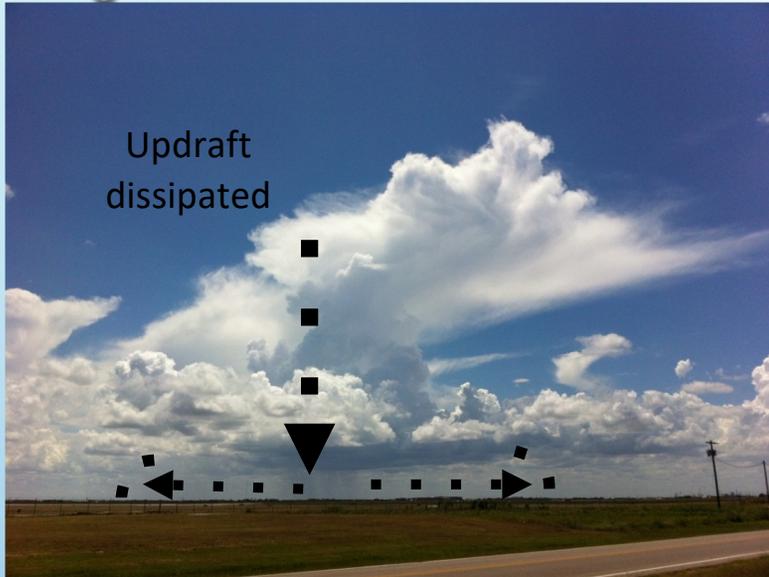
Top of the cloud forms an anvil, where air spreads outward

Updraft and Downdraft co-exist

Rain cooled air spreads out at the surface – gust front/outflow boundary

ORDINARY THUNDERSTORM LIFECYCLE

DISSIPATION STAGE



Updraft
dissipated

Whole life cycle
– 30-60 minutes

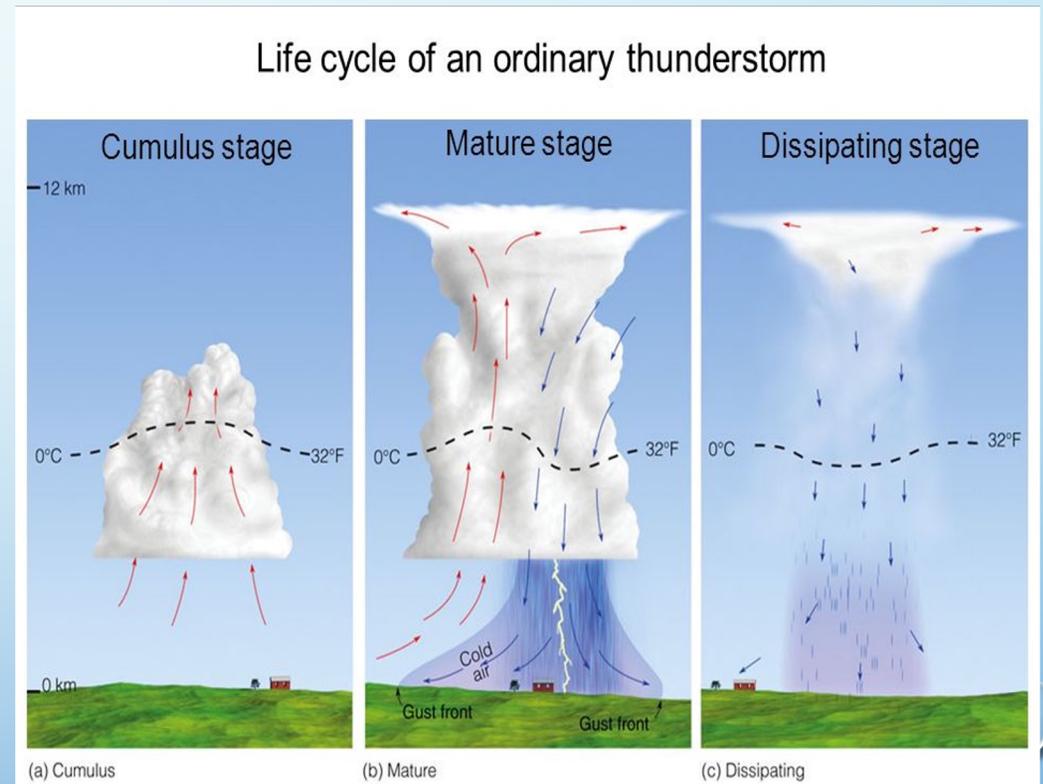
The remnants of the
anvil become wispy
(orphaned anvil)

Updraft dissipates as
gust front moves out
away from the storm

Only
downdraft
remains

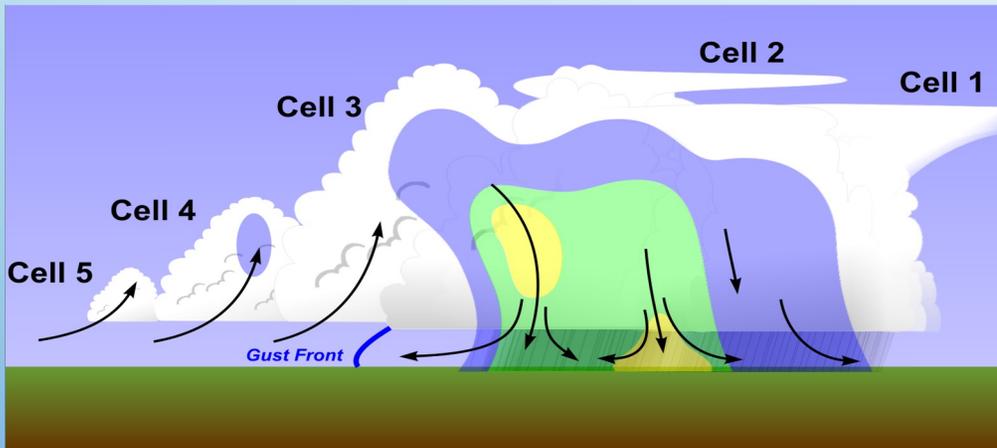
ORDINARY THUNDERSTORM THREATS

- **Most common over the mountains**
- **Can produce heavy rainfall and localized flooding**
- **Most can produce small hail, but a few storms can become severe**
- **Gusty winds are common during the dissipation stage**
- **Lightning is common**



MULTICELL THUNDERSTORMS

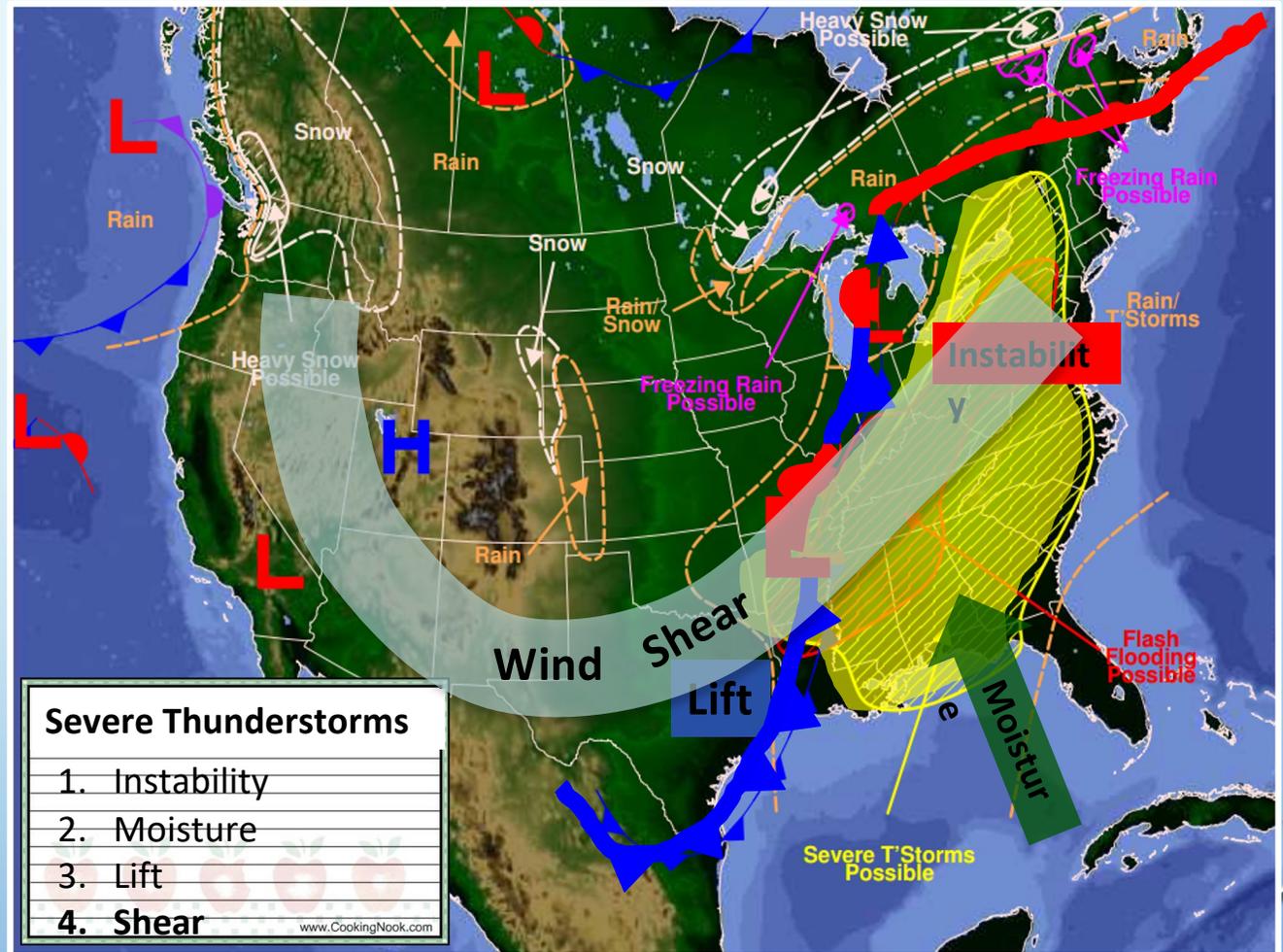
- Very similar threats to ordinary thunderstorms (hail, wind, heavy rain)
- More likely to be severe due to outflow winds and hail



MULTICELL THUNDERSTORMS



INGREDIENTS FOR “SEVERE” THUNDERSTORMS



THUNDERSTORM TYPES

More to Less Frequent/Common

Single Cell



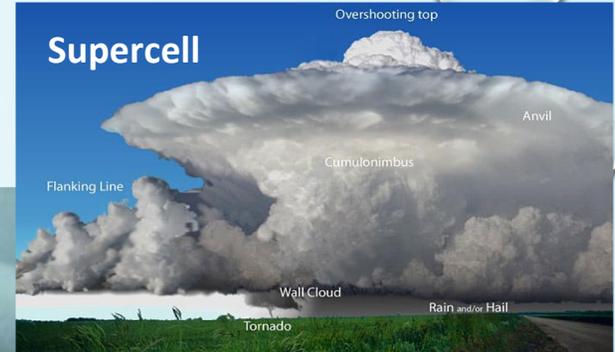
Multi Cell



Squall Line



Supercell

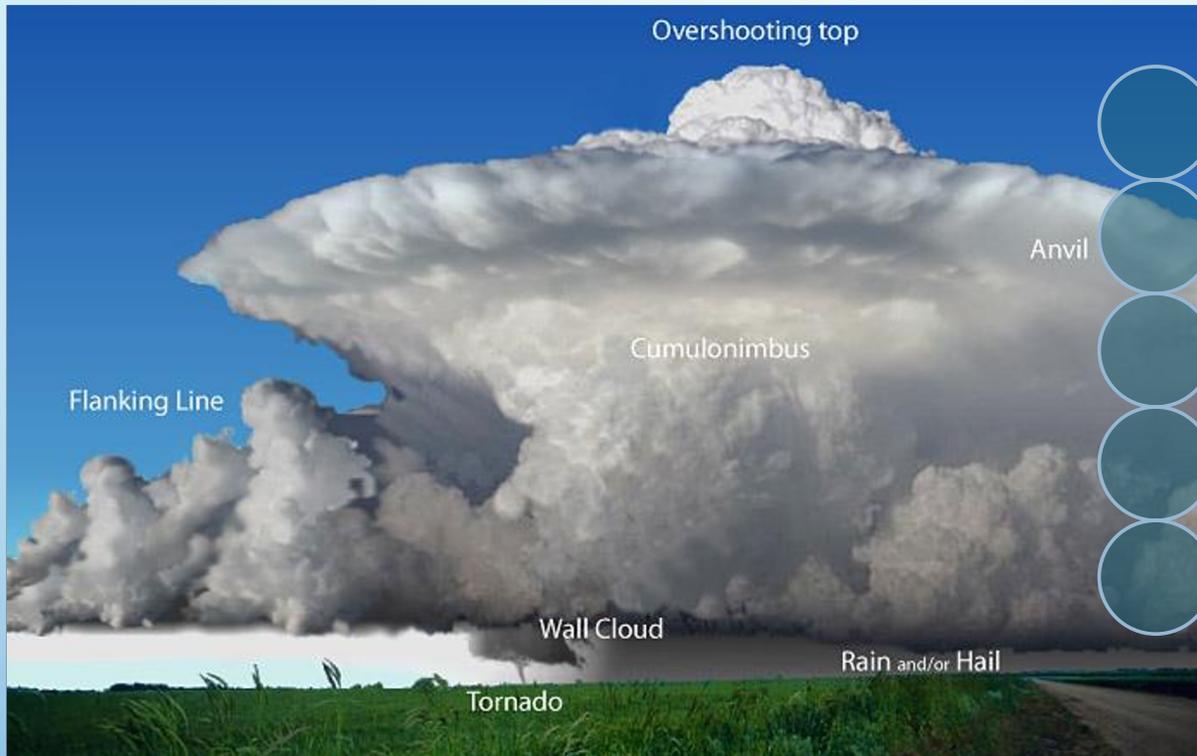


Increasing Threat

As instability and wind shear increases, so does the threat for severe weather



Supercell Thunderstorms



Moderate to Strong Wind Shear

Long-lived

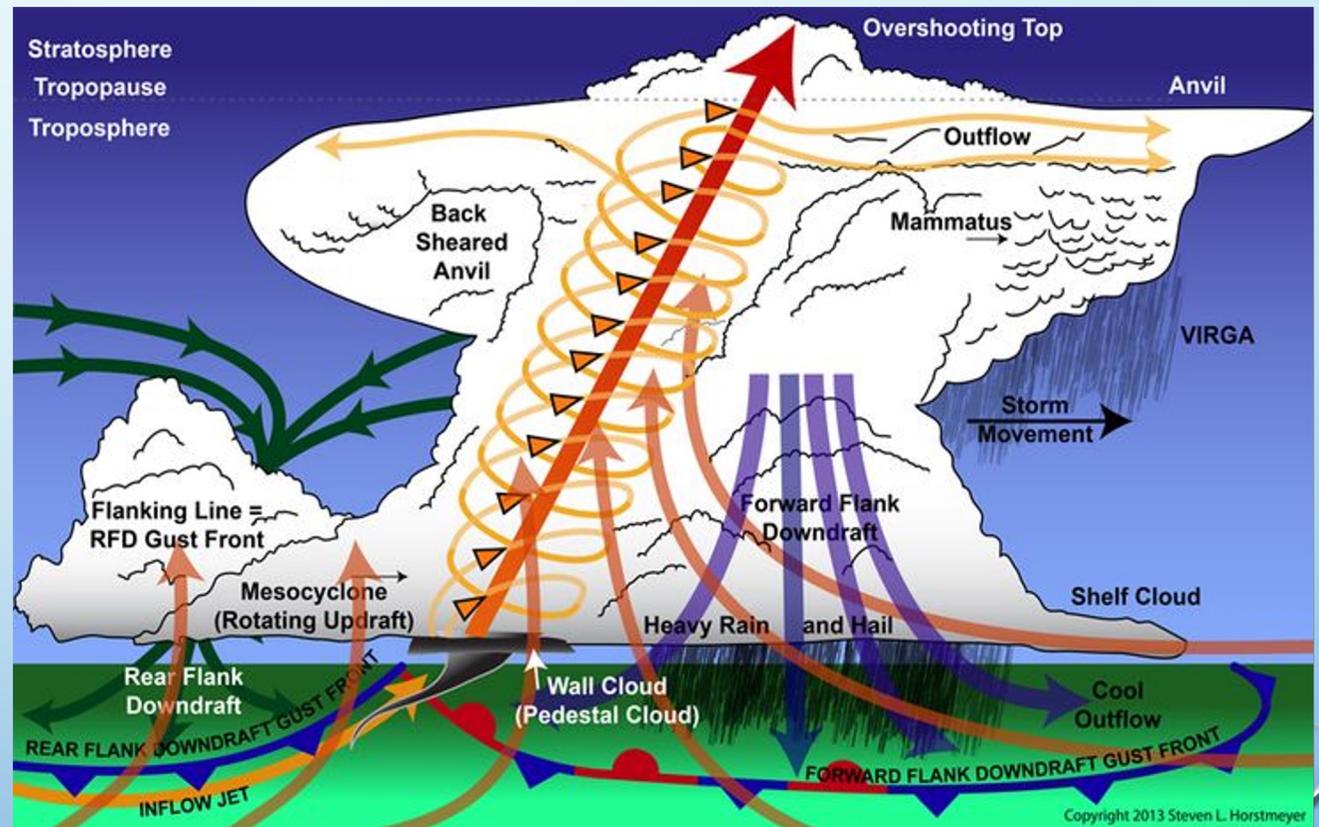
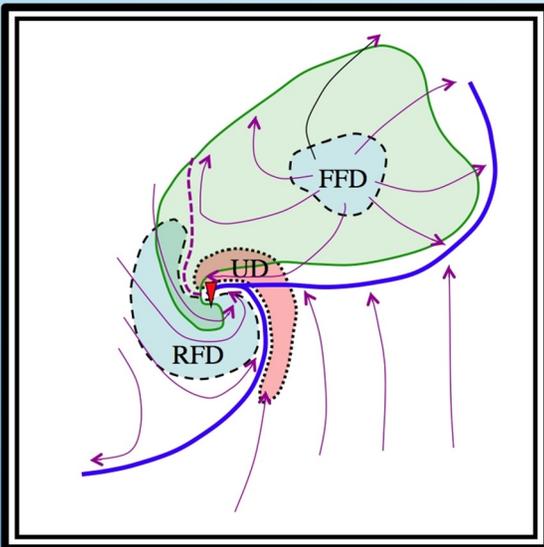
Meso-cyclone – intense storm-scale rotation through depth of storm

Usually isolated

Feed on warm moist air from miles around.

SUPERCELL THUNDERSTORMS

- Responsible for nearly all severe weather
- Large hail, strong winds and tornadoes
- Requires shear to rotate





Front of Storm Shelf Cloud Think Outflow & Rain

Back of Storm Wall Cloud Think Updraft & Tornado

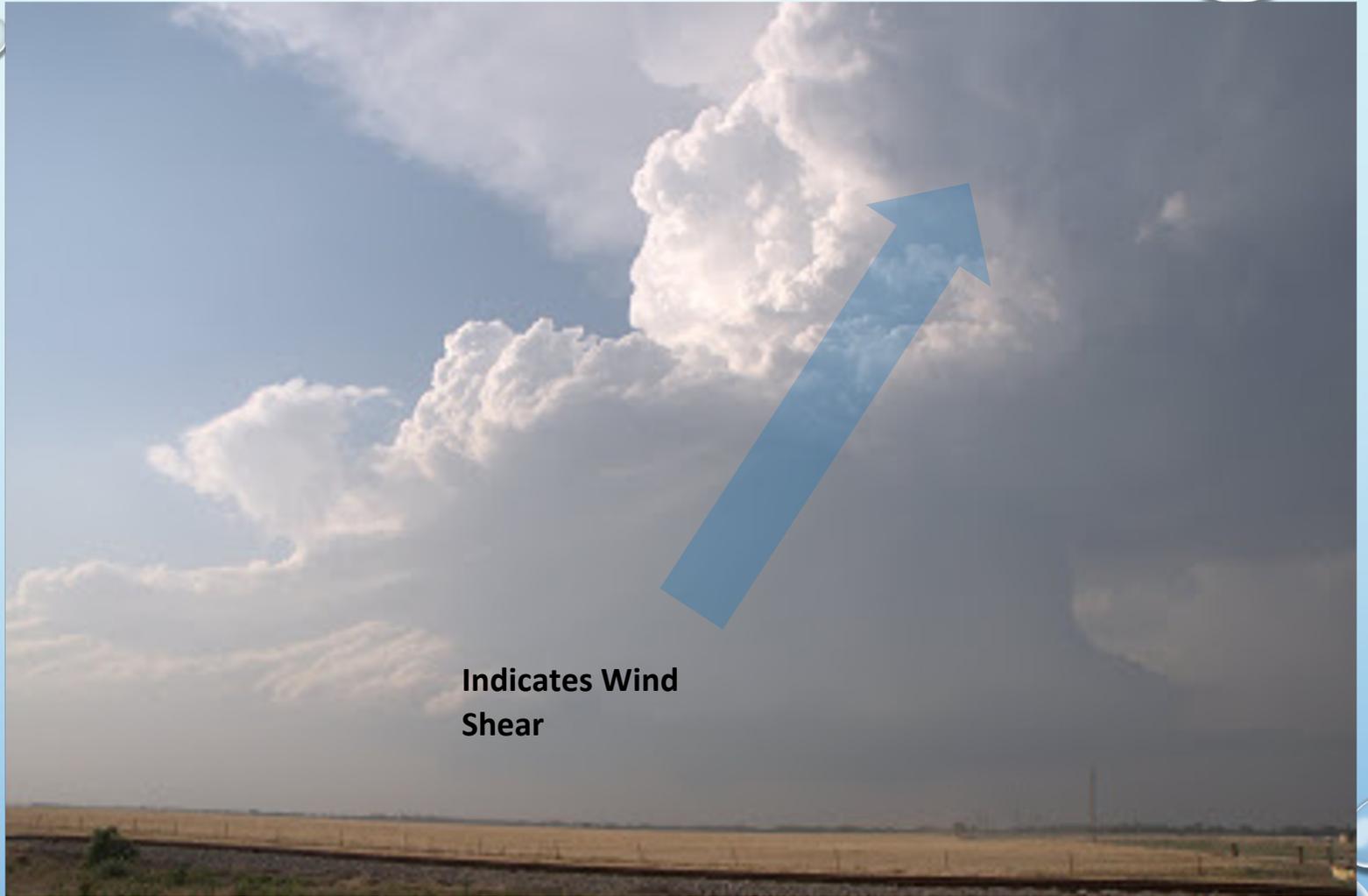


TWO FACES OF A SUPERCCELL

SUPERCELL THUNDERSTORM STRUCTURE



Tilted/ Rotating Updraft

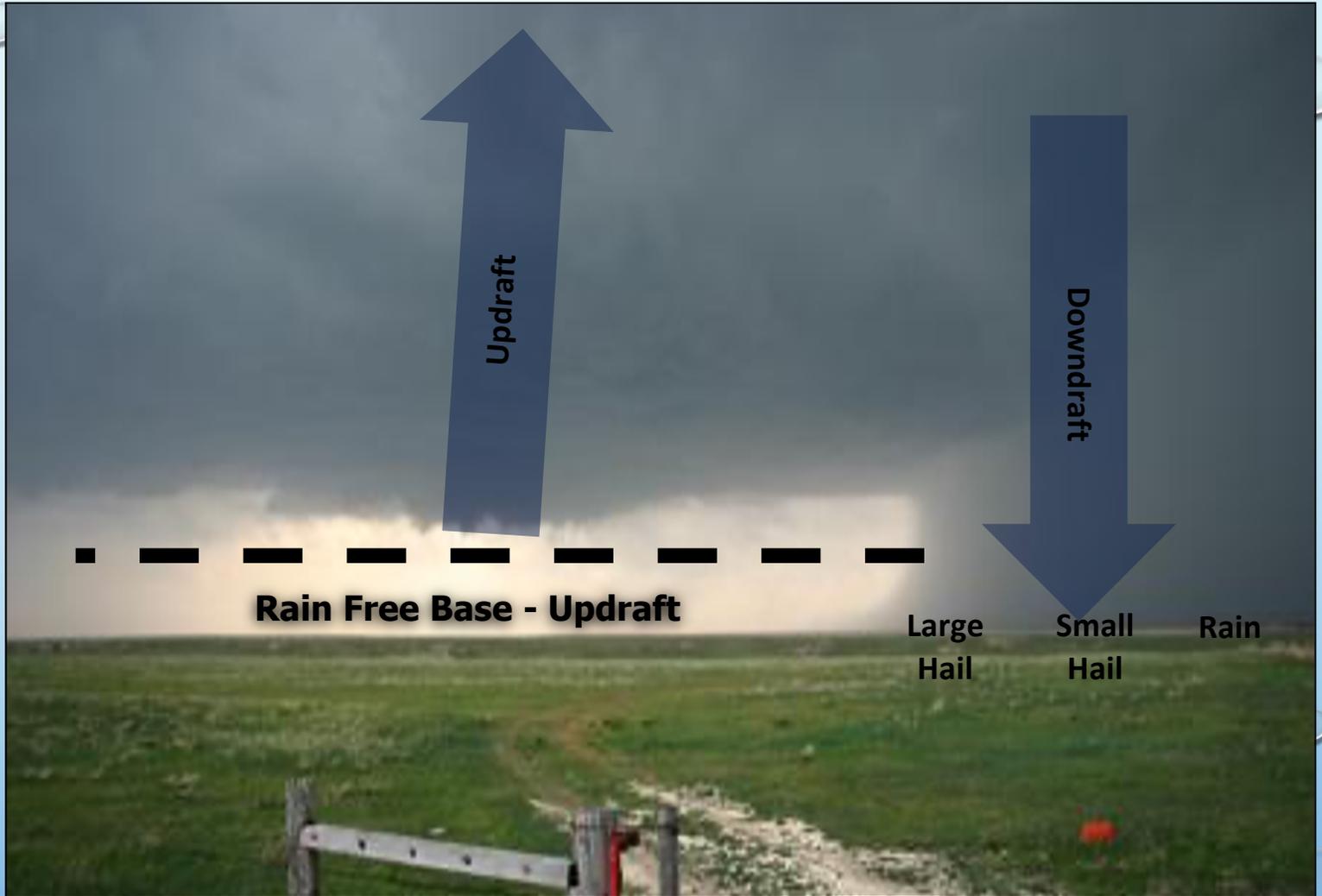


Indicates Wind
Shear

**Mesocyclone/
Supercell**



HAIL SHAFTS

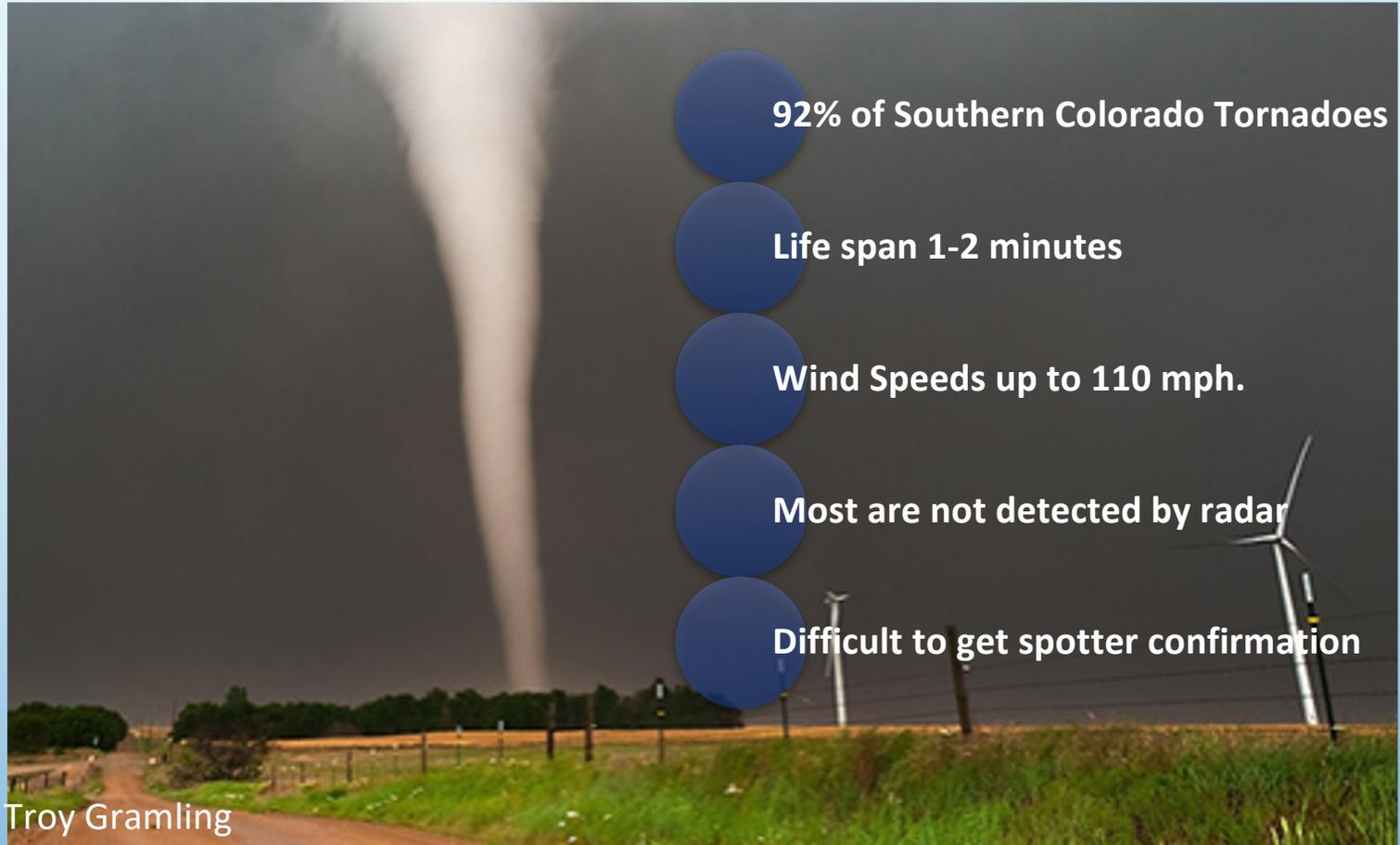


- **Tornadoes**
- **Non-Mesocyclone
Tornadoes**
- **Gustnadoes**

Starting with... the EF Scale!

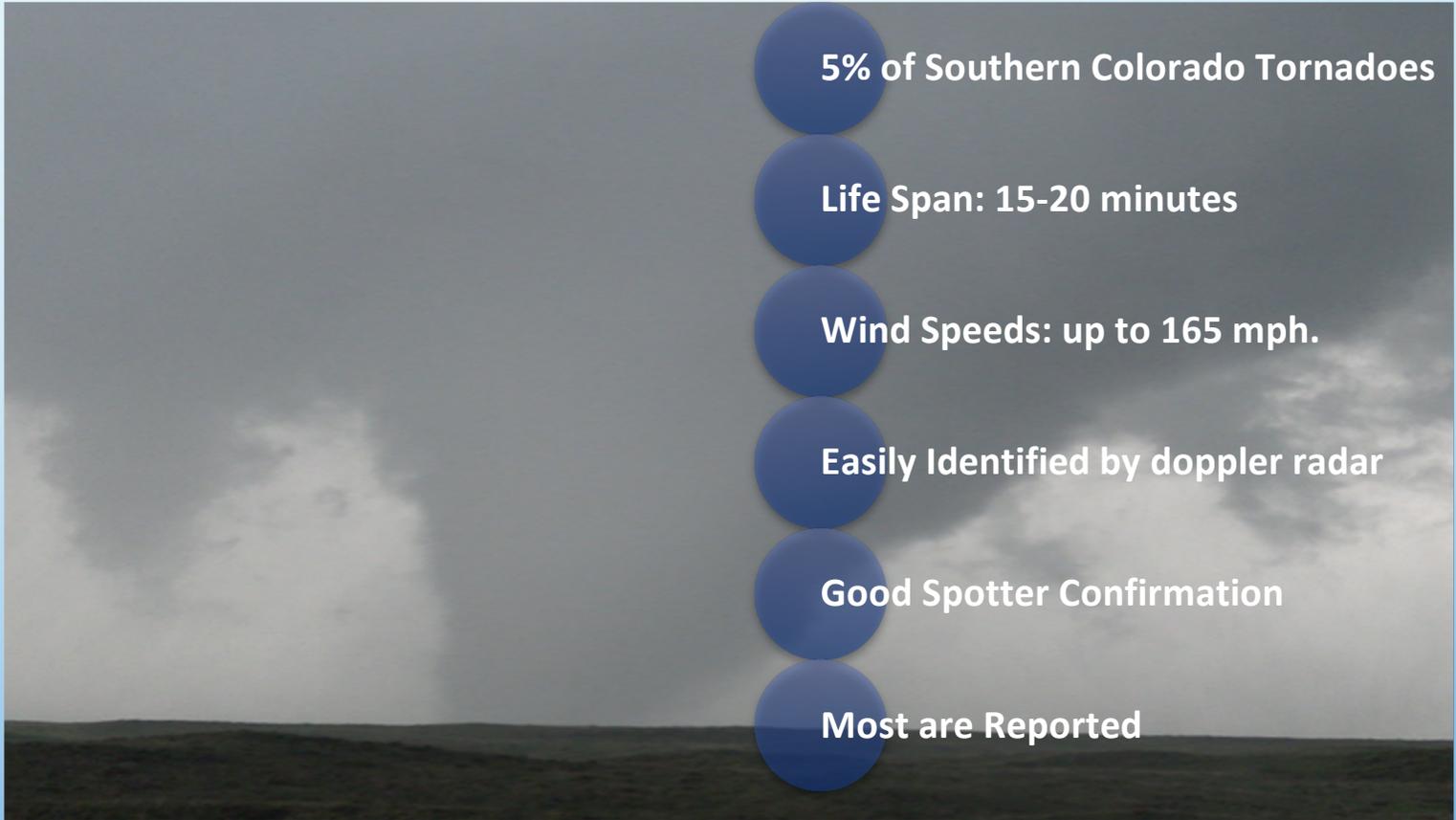
Weak Tornadoes

EF0 - EF1



Strong Tornadoes

EF2 – EF3



5% of Southern Colorado Tornadoes

Life Span: 15-20 minutes

Wind Speeds: up to 165 mph.

Easily Identified by doppler radar

Good Spotter Confirmation

Most are Reported

Violent Tornadoes

EF4 – EF5

Tuscaloosa AL
April 27, 2011

None have occurred in
Southern Colorado

Life span 1-2 hours.

Wind speeds over 200 mph



Non-Mesocyclone Tornadoes

- Form most often beneath rapidly developing towering cumulus or thunderstorms
- NOT associated with a large scale, deep rotation (mesocyclone) in a supercell storm
- Circulation connects to the cloud base
- Can be persistent and destructive, due to slow movement
- Most common form of tornado in Colorado



What is a Gustnado?

- Small short-lived vortex (it is rotating) along the storm's outflow winds
- Can cause damage, but technically it is NOT a tornado because the circulation does NOT extend up to the base of the cloud

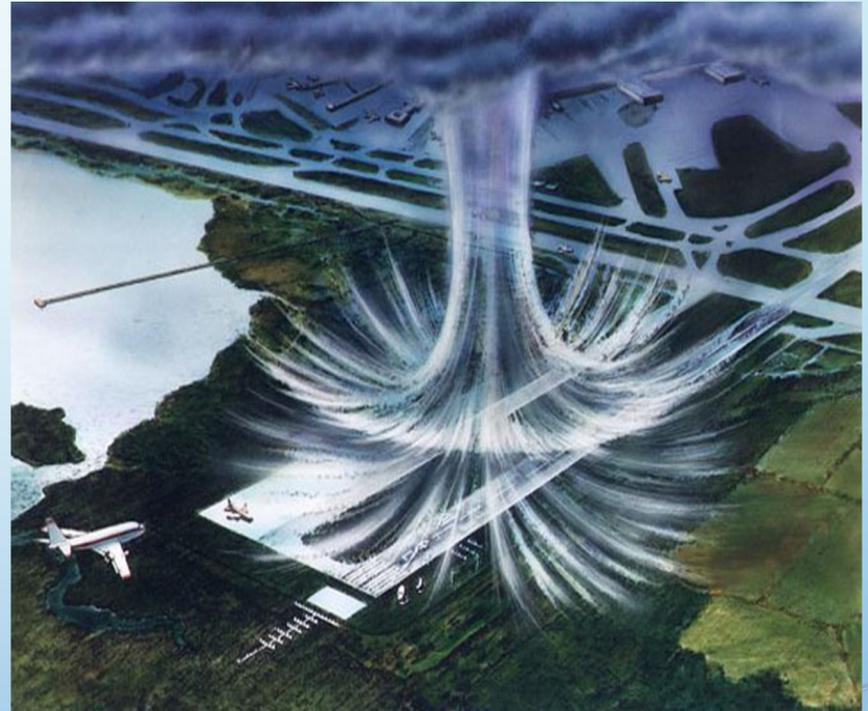


Severe Wind Threats

Microbursts and Straight-line Winds

Microbursts and Macrobursts

- 2 types: Wet and Dry
- Dry Microbursts are most common in Colorado
- Can produce severe winds 60 to over 100 MPH
- Particularly hazardous for aviation
- Winds spread out in all directions at the ground
- Microbursts
 - only impact a small area
 - usually less than 2.5 miles in diameter
 - Only last 2 to 5 minutes
- Macrobursts
 - Greater than 2.5 miles in diameter
 - Last 15 to 20 minutes



Wet vs. Dry

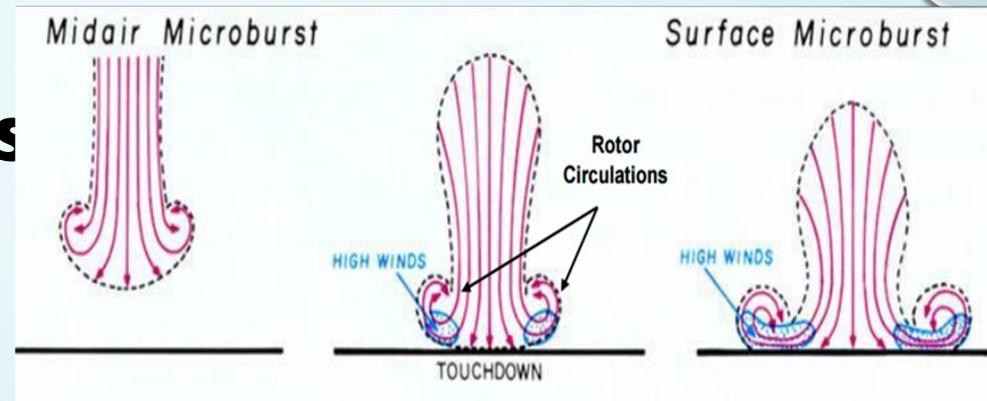
Dry Microbursts

- **When rain falls below the cloud base or is mixed dry air, it begins to evaporate**
- **This evaporation cools the air**
- **The cool air descends and accelerates as it approaches the ground**
- **When it reaches the ground, it spreads out in all directions**

Wet Microbursts

- **Downbursts accompanied by significant precipitation at the surface**
- **Relies more on the drag of precipitation for downward acceleration of parcels**

Microburst Process



Contact Stage

- Initially develops as the downdraft begins its descent from the cloud base
- The downdraft accelerates and within minutes reaches the ground
- Its during this contact stage the highest winds are observed

Outburst Stage

- The wind curls as the cold air of the downburst moves away from the ground contact point

Cushion Stage

- Winds in the curl continue to accelerate
- Winds at the surface slow due to friction

Wet Downburst

s



Dry Downburst s



SHELF CLOUD and Straight-line Winds



Trevor White

Shelf clouds point away from the rain.

Along the
LEADING EDGE
of the Gust Front
(Associated with
the Downdraft)

WALL CLOUD OR SHELF CLOUD?



Shelf Clouds

- Downdraft and straight-line winds
- Points *away from* rain shaft

Wall Clouds

- Updraft & Tornado Region
- Points *towards* rain shaft

Reporting Overview

When to Report?

As soon as you feel comfortable, usually **after** the reportable weather occurs.



3 C's of Emergency Communication

Clear

Concise

Calm



GOOD Example

Who Are You?

- Name

Where Are You?

- Exact location
- Easy to find on a map

What Do You See?

- Describe it
- Be brief

Where Did You See It?

- Where IT was
- Don't get confused

When Did It Happen?

- Be specific

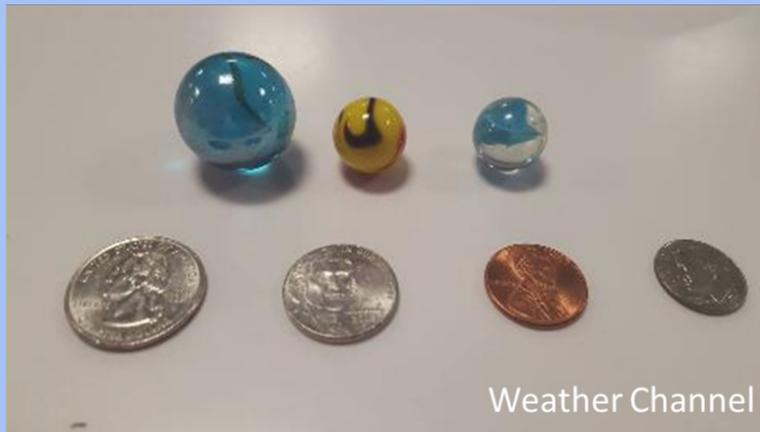
What to Report...Hail

Report widest diameter of hailstone

Report hail Penny size or larger

Severe Thunderstorms require hail of 1 inch in diameter (Quarter sized hail)

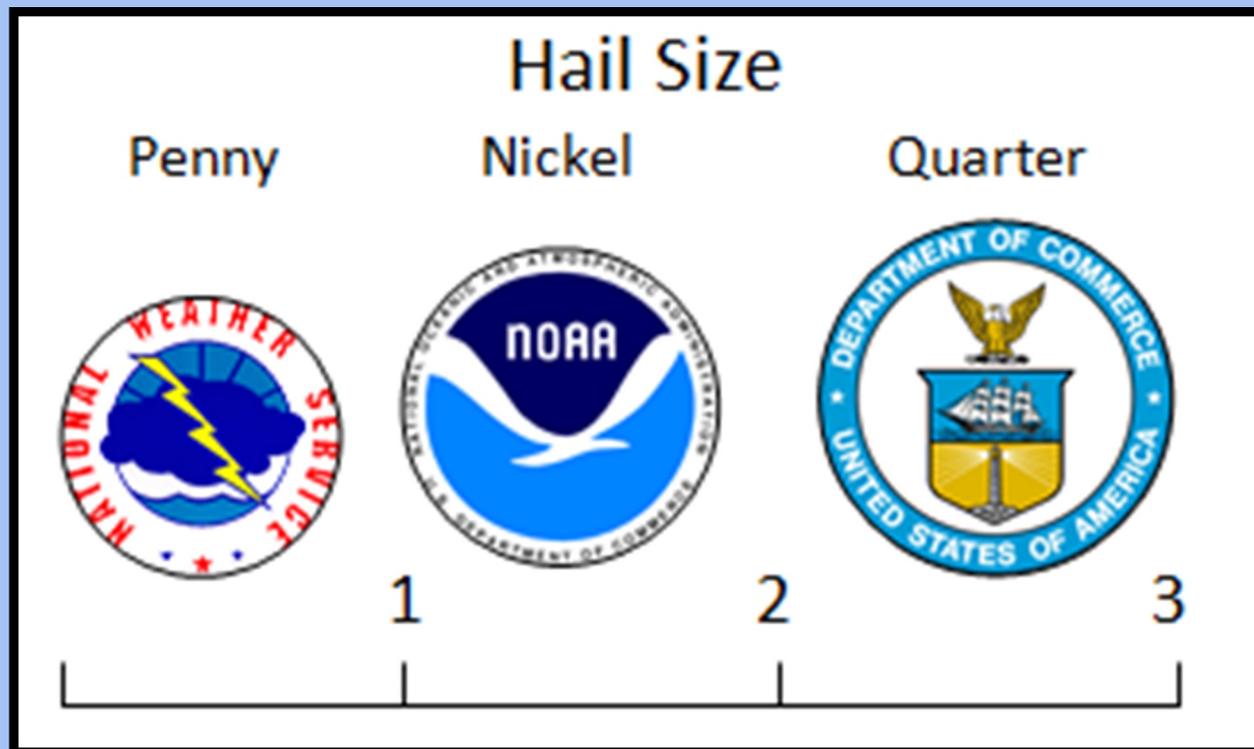
Do NOT report Marble size hail (they come in all different sizes!)



Common Object	Size
BB	<.25"
Pea	.25"
Dime	.7"
Penny	.75"
Quarter	1"
Half Dollar	1.25"
Ping Pong Ball	1.5"
Golf Ball	1.75"
Hen Egg	2"
Tennis Ball	2.5"
Baseball	2.75"
Grapefruit	4.00"

What to Report...Hail

Hail Card



What to Report...Hail

Hail Card

Severe Weather Spotter Card - WFO Pueblo, CO

To report by phone to WFO Pueblo - **1-800-884-1540**

WHO, WHERE, DIRECTION LOOKING, **Local (948-3838)**

WHAT, WHEN

EVENT

TORNADO -	Location and size
FUNNEL CLOUD -	Location and size
RAPIDLY ROTATING WALL CLOUD -	Location and size
WIND -	Direction and estimated speed (if possible)
HAIL -	Size of largest stone related to coins, or in inches
FLOODING -	of creeks, rivers and roadways, etc.

What to Report...Damaging Winds

Winds of 58 mph (50 knots) or greater

- Only if it is measured

Physical damage caused by the winds

- Include measured or best estimate of large branches or trees



© Tom Magnuson

Thunderstorm Damage: Winds or Tornado?

How do you tell if wind damage is caused by 'straight-line'/outflow winds, or a tornado?



Wind Damage: Trees and debris are scattered in a single direction (the 'straight' in straight-line winds)



Tornado Damage: More haphazard. Debris appears 'tossed' in scattered/random directions

What to Report... **Rotating** Wall and/or Funnel Clouds

Rotating Wall Cloud

Funnel Cloud

Lowering of rain-free base

Look for persistent rotation

Rapidly rotating wall cloud often precedes tornado development



What to Report...Tornado



Again, the air is the tornado, not the condensation funnel.

What to Report...Flash Flooding

Best estimate of water depth

- Do not enter flood waters to measure
- If unsure, use references such as curbs or wheels on a car

Any damage or washed-out roads



Courtesy of NWS Social Media



Courtesy of NWS Social Media

Snow Reporting

Winter Weather Reporting Criteria

Remember to include **Time**, **Location**, **Condition**, and **Source** in your report!

Example: "At **7am** I measured **4"** of **new snow** here in **Duluth** - this is **Joe**, a trained spotter"

Snow

- You may report any amount, but **we want reports of 1" or greater of new snowfall**
- Report anytime, but in the morning (~7am) and/or after the storm is great
- Use a snow board if possible!
- If you don't have a snow board, take multiple measurements and avoid drifts!
- May also report total snow depth on the ground (snow pack)

Ice

- **Please report ANY ice, even just a glaze**
- 1. **Flat Ice** - Measure thickness of ice on flat surface like a flat deck railing or patio furniture
- 2. **Radial Ice** - Measure ice around a branch - we want the **RADIUS** of the ice around a branch
- Report any impacts from ice (i.e. downed branches)

Snowfall Measurement

You Will Need...

1. Ruler/Measuring Stick
2. Snow Board (2'x2' plywood painted white)
3. Flag/reflective marker (to find the snow board!)
4. Standard 4" Rain Gauge
(Optional, ~\$40, Visit cocorahs.org)



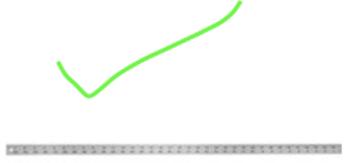
36" Yardstick

Compare Add To List

Sku # 2441500

\$0.87

You Save \$0.11 After Mail-In Rebate



36" Aluminum Yardstick

Compare Add To List

Sku # 2441493

\$2.22

You Save \$0.27 After Mail-In Rebate

Where do I measure the snow?

Q: Can I just measure on my deck/patio?

A: Sometimes - if there was little wind/drifted it might be OK, but measure from a surface at least 2'x2' (No deck railings!)

Q: Will I always measure snowfall in the same spot?

A: Not necessarily. Find a place where snow is least drifted and about average depth for the location. Use your best judgement.

Submitting a Report

YES

Is it life-threatening?

**PROBABLY
NOT**

Direct/Voice

*Tornado
Damaging Hail
Destructive Wind
Dangerous Flooding
Also call 911?*

**SpotterNetwork
Amateur Radio
Online Form
Twitter
Facebook
Email**

Calling Us for a Report



Dial
1-800-
884-1540



What
Weather
You
Witnessed



Where It
Was
Witnessed



What
Time It
Was
Witnessed

Social Media



Twitter/X

@NWSPueblo

Use #pubspotter

Send reports and pictures

Constantly monitored

Facebook

@NWSPueblo

Send reports and pictures

Constantly monitored

Amateur Radio

Pikes Peak
SKYWARN: 147.345
107.2Hz tone

Pueblo SKYWARN:
146.790
88.5Hz tone

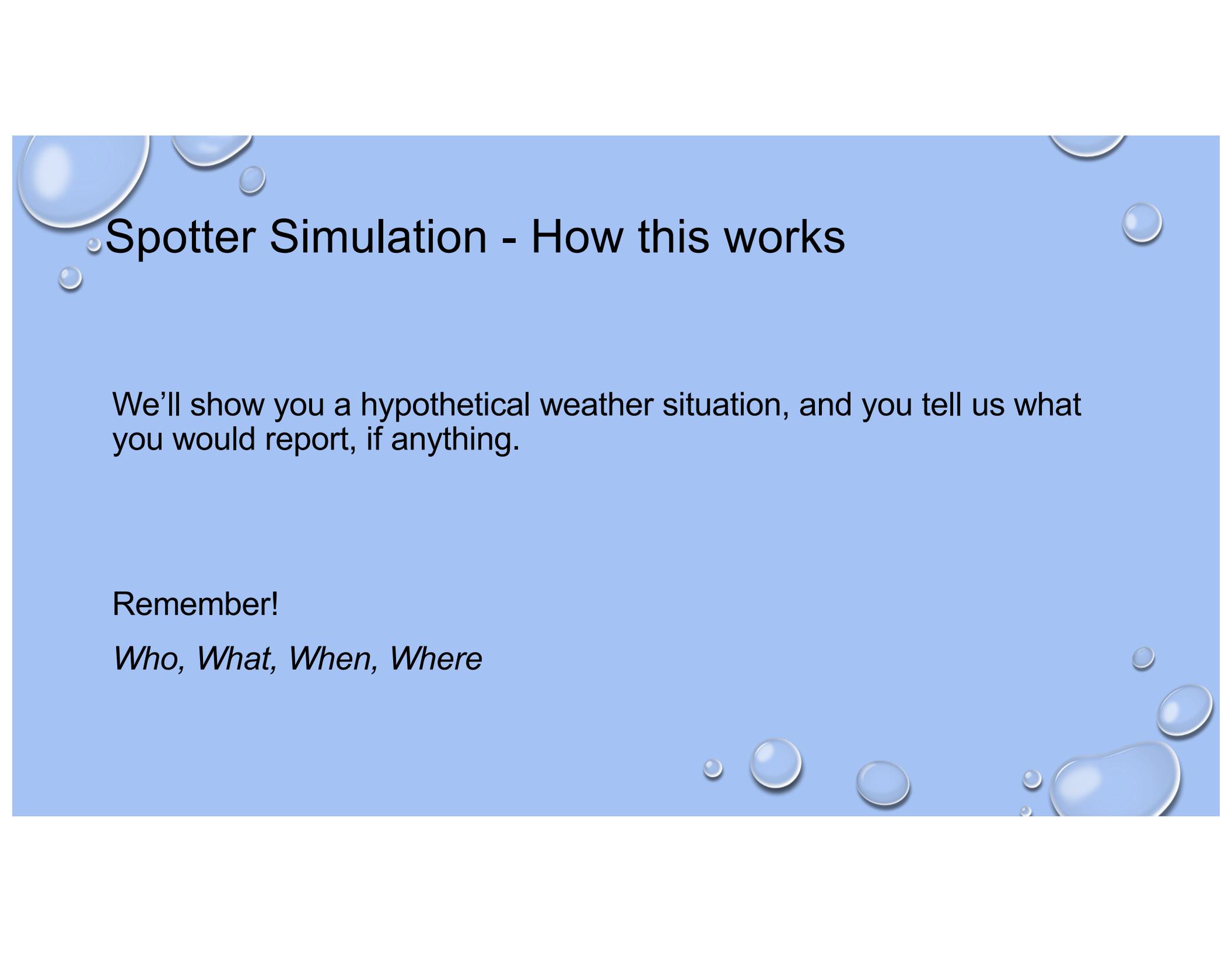


EMAIL

nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

- Good way to send us pictures or videos, especially after the storm is over.



The background is a solid light blue color with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The title 'Spotter Simulation - How this works' is positioned in the upper left quadrant, with a small white circle to its left.

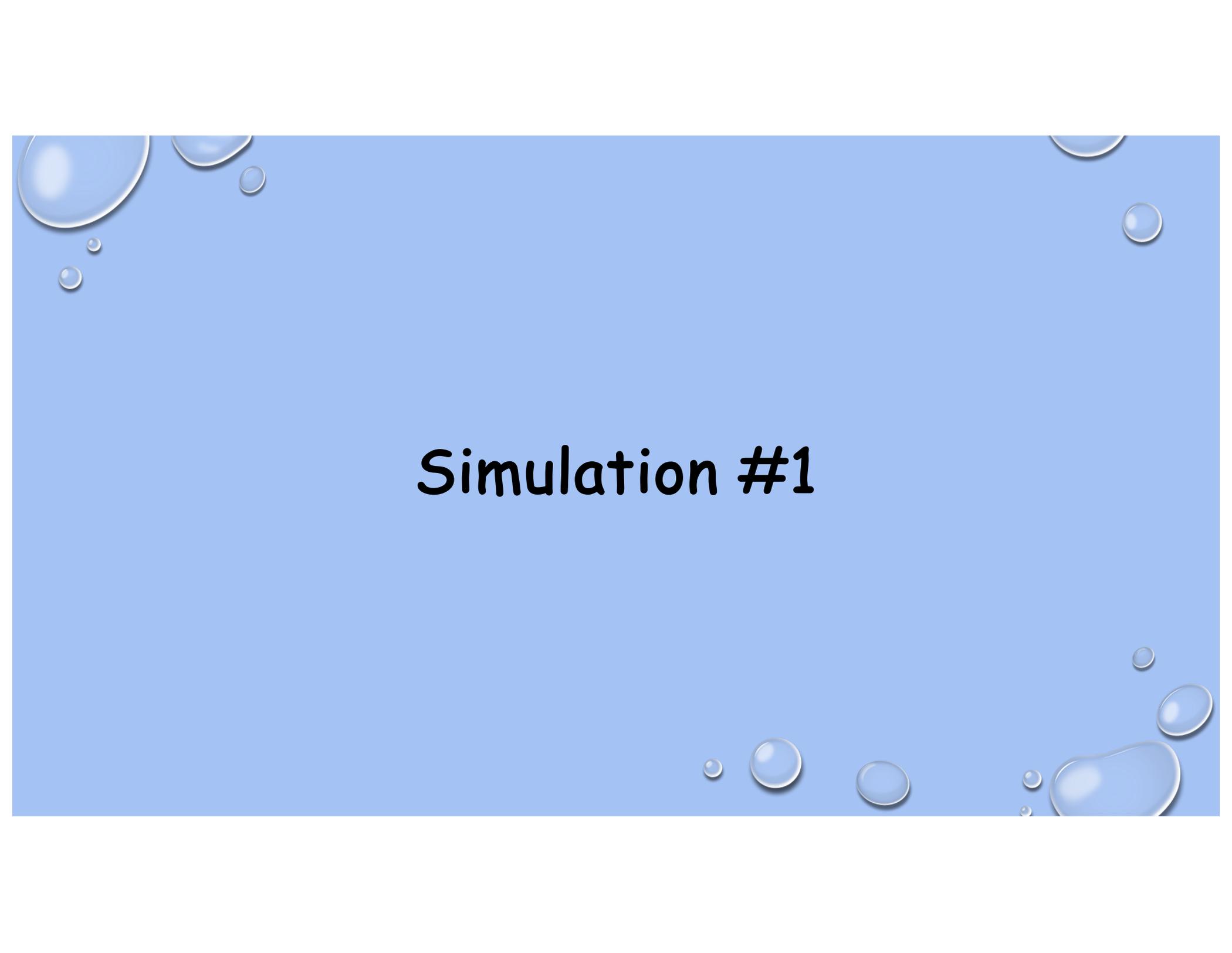
Spotter Simulation - How this works

We'll show you a hypothetical weather situation, and you tell us what you would report, if anything.

Remember!

Who, What, When, Where

Simulation #1

The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic water droplets of various sizes, scattered primarily in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Simulation #1 - Scenario

- Thunderstorms have been rolling through the area all afternoon. But then, you start to hear the sounds of loud impacts on the roof.
- Practicing good weather safety, you wait until the sounds have *stopped*, before walking outside, where you find these->
- Is this reportable?



Simulation #1 - Results

Is this reportable? Yes, so long as the hail meets the size requirements

- What is the minimum size for reportable hail?
- Hail isn't always an easily-measured shape. How do we decide what to measure if different sizes and shapes are falling?



Simulation #1 - Measuring Hail

If the hail you find is all different sizes and shapes, find the *biggest* hailstone and measure along its *longest* axis.

- Why?
- The biggest hailstone will be the most dangerous.



Measure hail size with either a ruler or with your *official* NWS hail card!

Simulation #1 - Giving Your Report

What do you say?

Who? (*This is [Name], one of your Storm Spotters*)

Where? (*I'm at [Location]*)

When? (Either 'now' or when the hail fell.)

What? (*The storm that just passed dropped hail, measuring about...*)

Also be sure to report any damages! (Dented vehicles, broken glass, damaged plants/trees, etc.)

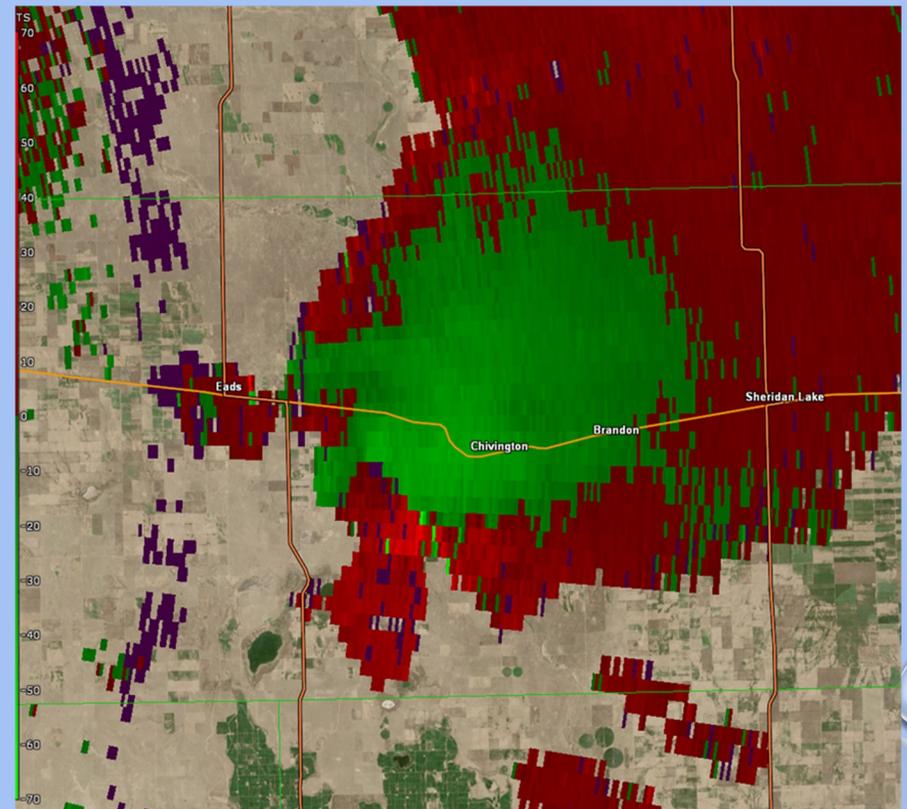
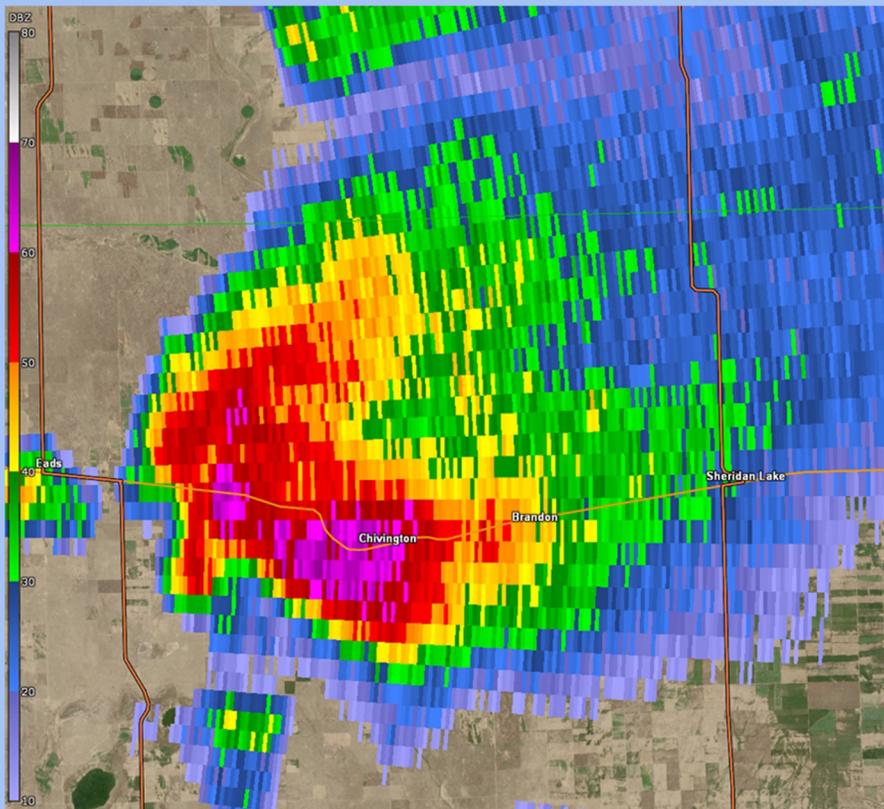
The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic water droplets of various sizes, scattered primarily in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Simulation #2

Simulation #2 - Scenario

- You're aware of the potential for severe weather today, and already see some strong thunderstorms popping up in your area during the afternoon.
- You check your favorite radar software/app and see the following images...

Simulation #2 - Radar Images



Simulation #2 - Scenario (cont.)

- Well, that looks spooky. Better keep an eye out!
- Since you don't hear any thunder at the moment, you decide to take a peek outside. For the sake of the scenario, let's pretend you're visiting your BFF on the south side of La Junta.
- Here is what you see...

What do we report here?

Let's say the storm is to your east, and moving north-ish.



Scenario #2 - Results

Is this reportable? Yes!

What do you say?

Who? (*This is [Name], one of your Storm Spotters*)

Where? (*I'm located on the south side of La Junta, looking east.*)

When? (Either 'now' or when you saw the hazard)

What? (*I see a funnel cloud to my east, lowered from the base of the clouds and moving north-northeast. I can't see the ground from where I am.*)

Why is this detail important?

The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic water droplets of various sizes, scattered primarily in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Simulation #3

Simulation #3 - Scenario

- It's been raining hard all day today, but you have errands to run!
- Dawning your favorite raincoat, you drive into town and finish your shopping, but on your way home, downtown Alamosa looks like this:



Scenario #3 - Results

Is this reportable? Yes!

What do you say?

Who? (*This is [Name], one of your Storm Spotters*)

Where? (*I'm in downtown Alamosa, near [this street or landmark].*)

When? (Either 'now' or when you saw the hazard)

What? (*There's bad street flooding here. I see a few disabled vehicles. I see water halfway up the wheels on a sedan, and the water is deeper where the road dips.*)

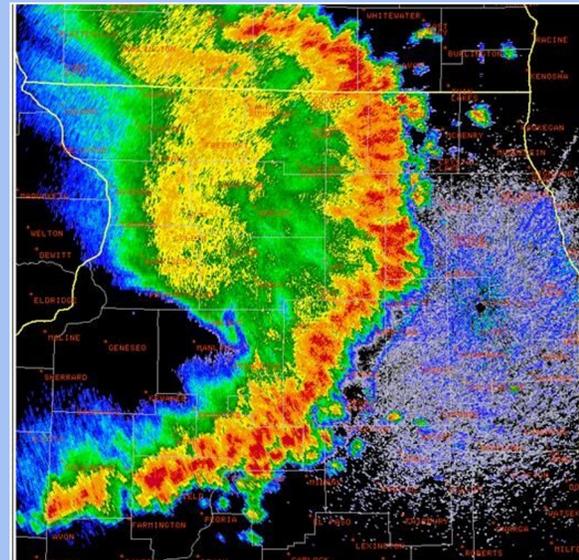
Why are these details important?

The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several realistic water droplets of various sizes, scattered primarily in the corners. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Simulation #4

Simulation #4 - Scenario

- A line of strong thunderstorms is tracking across the eastern plains, looking something like this on radar:



Simulation #4 - Scenario (cont.)

- The National Weather Service issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning across the entire line of storms, citing the possibility of 75 mph winds and 1-inch hail.
- Taking a peek out the window, here's what you see as the storm approaches:



What is this?

Is it reportable?

Simulation #4 - Scenario (cont.)

- That's a shelf cloud!
 - Remember, these clouds precede precipitation and strong winds!
- Is it reportable?
 - Actually, no. While the cloud itself is usually associated with stronger storms, you haven't actually seen any impacts or hazards to report yet.
- Seeing the incoming storm clearly now, you head back inside and shut the windows, preparing. The storm is pretty violent, but moves on quickly with plenty of loud snapping sounds.
- When you head outside **once the storm has passed**, this is what you see around the neighborhood:

What do you report?

More importantly, HOW do you report?



Simulation #4 - Results

- How do we report this?
 - Spotter safety! DON'T GO ANYWHERE NEAR DOWNED/DAMAGED POWER LINES. **EVER.**
- We report wind damage here, but what kind and of what severity?
 - Structural damage, tree size (measured or estimated, depending on scene safety)
 - Types of trees if you know, hardwood vs softwood, uprooted vs snapped, stripped bark, size of branches, etc.....

Simulation #4 - Report

Who? (*This is [Name], one of your Storm Spotters*)

Where? (*I'm at my home, in [location]*)

When? (Either 'now' or when you saw the hazard)

What? (*I'm reporting wind damage from the storms that just passed through. Several trees are down in my neighborhood, along with tons of branches. There's a lot of power line damage, and my neighbor's house has some broken windows. The bigger trees look about 8 inches thick or more, but I can't get close enough to measure with the power lines down.*)

**Thank you to all of those who
submitted photos and videos!**

Certificate Password: Skyw4rn2024!



THANK YOU!!!!!!

nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

800-884-1540

klint.skelly@noaa.gov

weather.gov/pub/spotters