

National Weather Service Hazard Simplification Project

Transition to Plain Language

The National Weather Service (NWS) has made the decision to replace “Advisory” and “Special Weather Statement” terminology from the Watch, Warning, and Advisory (WWA) system with plain language headlines.

These changes will be implemented no earlier than calendar year 2025. A Service Change Notice (SCN) will be sent to specify the exact date for this change.

Changes to Advisories & Special Weather Statements

All “Special Weather Statement” (SPS) and “Advisory” headlines will be transitioned to plain language headlines. These messages will be in a bulleted “What, Where, When, Impacts” format and equipped with computer-readable Valid Time Event Code (VTEC).

Exceptions

Exceptions to the transition to plain language will apply to Tsunami and Small Craft Advisories:

- The Small Craft Advisory will be transitioned to a Small Craft Warning.
- The Tsunami Advisory will remain unchanged while further research is underway.

Why is this being changed?

According to social science, the term Advisory can be confusing.



“Is this as bad as a Warning?”

“Is this a downgrade from a Watch?”

“What are you advising me to do?”

One goal of Hazard Simplification is to convey plain language in NWS displays without adding a third term.

What will this look like?

New text headlines led by the HAZARD NAME. For example:

SNOW: Hazardous travel in snow and blowing snow from 9am to 8pm

HEAT: Heat index values up to 100F until 4pm

Contact:

HazSimp@noaa.gov

More information is also available in the NWS PNS issued August 17, 2023.



Text Product Examples

Before: Advisory

/O.NEW.KBMX.WW.Y.0001.200208T1000Z-
200208T1700Z/Cherokee-
Including the city of Centre
815 PM CST Fri Feb 7 2020

**...WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY IN EFFECT
FROM 4 AM TO 11 AM CST SATURDAY...**

- * WHAT...Total snow accumulations of up to one inch.
- * WHERE...Northern Cherokee County.
- * WHEN...From 4 AM to 11 AM CST Saturday.
- * IMPACTS...Plan on slippery road conditions.

Now: Plain language headline

/O.NEW.KBMX.WW.S.0001.200208T1000Z-
200208T1700Z/Cherokee-
Including the city of Centre
815 PM CST Fri Feb 7 2020

**...SNOW: Hazardous travel from 4 AM to 11 AM
CST Saturday...**

- * WHAT...Total snow accumulations of up to one inch.
- * WHERE...Northern Cherokee County.
- * WHEN...From 4 AM to 11 AM CST Saturday.
- * IMPACTS...Plan on slippery road conditions.

Before: Special Weather Statement

North Snowy Range Foothills-
Including the cities of Arlington and Elk Mountain
1143 PM MDT Mon Sep 23 2019

...Strong westerly winds until this evening...

Strong westerly winds will pick up this morning by 7 AM and continue through the day, finally diminishing by 6 PM. Sustained winds around 30 mph with gusts of 45 to 50 mph are possible.

Now: Plain language headline

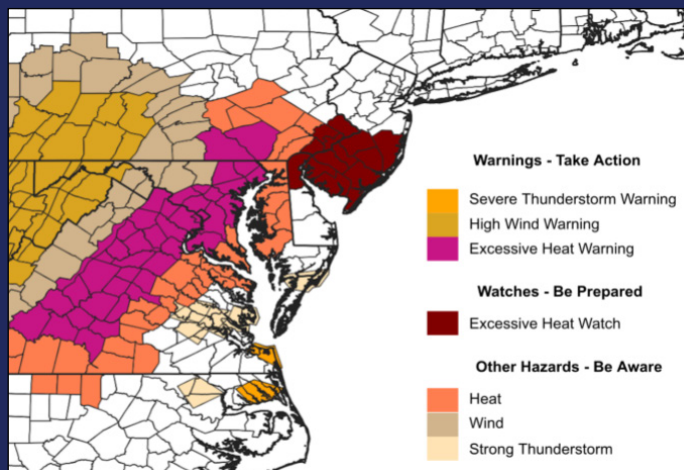
**/O.NEW.KCYS.WI.S.0001.190923T0543Z-
190923T0000Z/**

North Snowy Range Foothills-
Including the cities of Arlington and Elk Mountain
1143 PM MDT Mon Sep 23 2019

...WIND: Strong westerly winds 7 AM to 6 PM CST Tuesday...

- * **WHAT**...Sustained winds of 30 mph with gusts of 45 to 50 mph.
- * **WHERE**...North Snowy Range Foothills.
- * **WHEN**...Tuesday 7 AM to 6 PM.
- * **IMPACTS**...High profile vehicles will be most impacted.

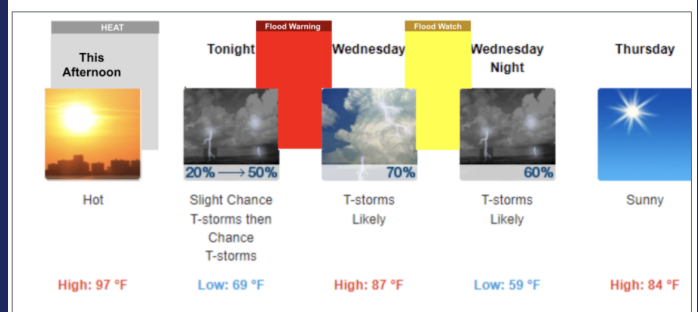
Visual Display Examples



National Map Display

Hazardous Weather Conditions

[Flood Warning in effect from June 14, 11:00 PM until June 15, 5:00 AM CDT](#)
[Flood Watch in effect from June 15, 11:00 PM until June 15, 2:00 AM CDT](#)
 HEAT: Heat index values up to 100F from June 14, 11:00 AM until June 14, 08:00 PM CDT
[Hazardous Weather Outlook](#)



Local Forecast Page