



Weather.gov

National Weather Service Support for Special Events

If you are planning a special event, one of your biggest concerns is likely the weather. Whether you are a private citizen or an event organizer planning an activity with a large number of participants and spectators, support for dealing with the impacts of weather is available and is easily accessible. No one can guarantee good weather, but the National Weather Service (NWS) can help you prepare for hazardous conditions that may put participants and spectators in harms way. Our partners in America's Weather Industry¹ can also provide a high level of specialized weather support.

What kinds of weather information are available to me from NWS?

The NWS is a government agency which provides weather, water, and climate information for the general public, including warnings to protect life and property. Some standard ways to receive NWS forecasts and warnings include the NOAA Family of Services, NOAA Weather Wire Service, NOAA Weather Radio, NWS web pages and our experimental XML/CAP feeds. Many of the information products provided by NWS are produced on a regular schedule, while some are produced as conditions warrant, e.g. tornado warnings.

Your local NWS office can help you determine the best means of receiving NWS products and ensure you know how to use them. NWS' highest priority is public safety. Always keep in mind that NWS issues watches, warnings, and other special products based upon severe weather criteria but rarely provide special forecasts for a particular activity or event.



Severe weather should be addressed in the planning for any special event

What if I need more specific weather-related help for planning and running my event? Should I hire a service provider from America's Weather Industry (AWI)?

If routine forecasts from the NWS aren't sufficient, and you need customized or highly localized information, you should consider a service provider from AWI. Our partners in the private sector can provide customized weather information, alerts, weather radar, communication devices, and consulting services. Support by AWI can be organized, tailored and packaged to help you make decisions about how to plan and run your special event and for the management of the event, its participants and spectators. NWS does not endorse any particular service provider, but we maintain a list of those available at <http://weather.gov/im/>

¹ America's Weather Industry includes all elements of the private sector (including media, consultants, equipment providers, etc.) which provide services to the public in the areas of climate, water, and weather. The term does not exclude foreign-owned companies which provide services to the American public.

If I hire a service provider from AWI, will NWS work with them?

Absolutely. The NWS is especially concerned that you are prepared for hazardous weather, and will want to talk with your service provider from AWI well before the event to coordinate roles in case a weather warning becomes necessary. Your service provider may also want to talk to us about availability of local weather information.

If weather becomes a threat to the event organized, will NWS let me know?

If you inform the NWS about your event planning in advance, we can work with you on how you can obtain the latest NWS forecasts and warnings and how NWS provides support for hazardous weather. We can also let you know if the level of support needed is beyond what NWS routinely provides.



When thunder roars, go indoors!

Will the NWS come to my event?

NWS can work directly with state and local government officials, such as Emergency Managers, to help ensure public safety. NWS also can provide outreach and education services (e.g. booth display) at special events. Several special event venues have also been recognized by the NWS' StormReady® program. StormReady helps ensure emergency operations planning addresses hazardous weather and that communication systems are effective and redundant.

What about National Special Security Events?

If a special event has been designated as a "National Special Security Event" by the Department of Homeland Security, NWS support is dictated by law. NWS will provide full and prompt coordination and weather, water and climate support for these events. NWS will cooperate with any service providers hired by the event coordinator.

What are some important weather safety tips for planning special events?

If you are a large venue operator or conducting a high attendance event, coordination should begin well in advance with local emergency management officials and first responders. Serious consideration needs to be given to postponing or canceling an event should forecasts, outlooks and watches state conditions are favorable for severe storms. In addition, continuously monitor forecasts and warnings, train your staff on hazardous weather response through exercises, and have multiple methods for communicating information to employees and attendees. The more detailed the information you provide to attendees, repeated often through multiple communication means, the more likely they are to act on your safety instruction.

Related web sites:

NOAA NWS on the web: www.weather.gov

NOAA NWS' StormReady Program: www.stormready.noaa.gov

NOAA Family of Services: www.weather.gov/datamgmt/fos/fosindex.html

NOAA Weather Wire Service: www.weather.gov/nwws/index.html

NOAA Weather Radio: www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr

Experimental XML/CAP 1.1 Feeds and Web Displays: www.nws.noaa.gov/alerts-beta/

FEMA's emergency planning guide for businesses: www.ready.gov/business/index.html