

Funnel Clouds Vs. Wall Clouds

Funnel Cloud



Wall Cloud



Scud Clouds



Funnel Clouds, Wall Clouds & Scud Clouds

- Funnel Clouds rotate, usually rapidly, extending downward from the cloud base
- Look for debris/dirt being kicked up to ascertain if the Funnel Cloud has reached the ground and become a tornado
- As opposed to scud clouds, funnel clouds typically have a smooth appearance
- Funnel clouds are generally located near the up-draft, usually vertical, and several orders of magnitude smaller than parent wall cloud.
- Tail Clouds are often horizontal and funnel-like but do not rotate.
- Tail Clouds should not be confused with actual funnel clouds
- Scud clouds will have a ragged non-funnel appearance
- Scud clouds will move up and down from the cloud base
- Most important distinction with all of the cloud types is ROTATION!!!!
- **If the cloud is not rotating there is no tornado!!!**

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Severe Weather Spotter Safety Guide



**SAVING LIVES
&
PROTECTING PROPERTY**

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SEVERE STORM SPOTTER SAFETY GUIDE

General Spotter Safety

- Set up Command Post at the fire station
- Always storm spot in teams of two
- One spotter can watch the storm while the other watches the road and for other hazards
- Try to watch the storm from the southwest looking north
- Make sure you have escape routes from your spotting location
- Do not park under or around power lines
- Make sure you are well off the travel portion of the road with hazards/flashers on
- Stay in your vehicle if possible
- If you do leave your vehicle do not get to far away

Night Time Spotting

If there is a need for night time spotting here are additional tips to ensure your safety.

- Note the wind direction & sudden changes in direction
- Watch for ground based flashes produced by a tornado hitting power lines
- Use lighting to note storm structure & possible lowering cloud base

Lightning Hazards

- Pay attention to approaching areas of lightning
- Stay in your vehicle if possible
- Stay away from wire fences; they carry lightning currents to you
- Do not lean on vehicle and act as a path to the ground
- Avoid single trees and being highest object
- If you hair stands up there is potential for a lightning strike
- Get in your vehicle or squat on the ground on the balls of your feet

Wind Speed Estimation Chart

- **25-31 mph** Large branches in motion
- **32-38 mph** Whole trees in motion
- **39-54 mph** Twigs break off
- **55-72 mph** Damage to chimneys & TV antennas, large branches broken & some trees uprooted
- **73-112 mph** Removes shingles, windows broken, trailer houses overturned, trees uprooted
- **113+ mph** Roofs torn off, weal buildings & trailer houses destroyed, large trees uprooted

Communication with Dispatch

Please be patient. There is a large increase in radio & phone traffic during a severe weather event. Here are a few tips for communicating with Dispatch.

- Do not use Tac Channels. These need to be free for emergencies arising from the storm
- Do use your private channels for talking between personnel
- Continue to monitor the main Fire/EMS channel for updates from Dispatch

What to report to Dispatch

- Hail needs to be reported as nickel, dime, golf ball or baseball. Do Not report marble size hail. Marbles come in different sizes
- High Winds & Building Damage
- Downed power lines & trees. Estimate the diameter of the tree. Advise if power lines or trees are blocking the road.
- Damage to buildings
- Funnel clouds, Wall Clouds, and Tornadoes. Advise direction of travel & speed.
- Flash Flooding

