

Appendices

Appendix 1 – MetService Severe Weather Criteria



Severe Weather

- what is it and how does MetService keep you informed?

What is 'Severe Weather'?

- It's weather that has the potential to seriously disrupt your day and could cause harm to you, your property or your possessions.
- The term is used to cover 'heavy rain', 'heavy snow', 'strong winds', and 'thunderstorms' and we use specific criteria and thresholds to define when these events are severe.
- MetService will issue a warning if criteria is expected to be reached.

How far in advance is severe weather forecast?



- Typically, MetService will issue advice six days out from potential severe weather through our 'Severe Weather Outlook'. This applies to rain, wind and snow. The **Outlook** is a 'heads up' that although we can see something coming, there is some uncertainty about what might happen and where.
- As an event gets closer and we can be more specific about severe weather timing, location and intensity, we will issue a '**Watch**' (with colour-code Yellow) or a '**Warning**' (with colour-code Orange or Red depending on the severity of the event). See overleaf for an explanation of Watches and Warnings.
- Thunderstorms are different. They form incredibly quickly and are less predictable days in advance so our 'heads up' Outlook for a thunderstorm is, at best, 36 hours before the event. Because a severe thunderstorm has the potential to have significant impact and disruption, a Thunderstorm Warning will always be Red.

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Criteria for Severe Weather



Heavy Rain

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

More than 50mm in six hours
or
More than 100mm in 24 hours



Strong Wind

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

Gales with a minimum mean speed of 90km/h
or
Frequent gusts exceeding 110km/h



Thunderstorms

Affects a localised area (small-scale) for a short period of time.

Rain of 25mm/h or more
or
Hailstones 20mm in diameter or larger
or
Wind gusts of 110km/h or stronger
or
Tornados with windspeeds of 116km/h or stronger



Heavy Snow

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

Snowfall below: 1000m in the North Island, South Canterbury and Otago; 500m in the rest of the South Island.

Snow depth of 10cm within six hours
or
Snow depth of 25cm within 24 hours

What size is 1000km²? It is about the size of a box drawn around the outside of Lake Taupo.

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