



Licking County Planning Department  
And Offices of Community & Economic Development  
20 South Second Street, Newark, Ohio 43055

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***2009 Severe Weather Calendar of Events***

[National Flood Safety Awareness Week - March 16-20, 2009](#)

Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week - March 22-28, 2009

Statewide Tornado Drill - March 25, 2009 9:50 a.m.

[National Lightning Safety Awareness Week - June 21-27, 2009](#)

Ohio's Winter Safety Awareness Week - November 15-21, 2009

**National Flood Safety Awareness Week March 16 - 20, 2009**

by Julia Dian-Reed, National Weather Service, Jeff Walker, Licking County Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security/911 Agency, Jim Mickey, Licking County Planning Department, and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness

Seasons come and seasons go, but the need for safety in dealing with severe weather events knows no season. In fact, the more information we have regarding extremes of nature, the better that we can protect our family, our property, and our community.

Licking County officials have partnered with various other agencies and entities to present the following information to help increase the safety of our citizens as we leave winter weather behind us and head into the spring and summer seasons.

The National Weather Service typically uses a variety of specific weather terms to relay information to public officials and citizens. Below is a list of many terms used to describe severe weather in Licking County, the State of Ohio, and the United States of America.

**Spring & Summer Severe/Hazardous Weather Terms**

**The National Weather Service (NWS) is responsible for issuing severe weather watches, warnings and advisories to alert the public when dangerous weather conditions are expected.**

- **Watch** - The potential exists for a dangerous weather event.
- **Warning** - A dangerous weather event is imminent. Immediate action must be taken to protect life and property.
- **Advisory** - Less severe than a warning, but a hazardous weather event is still imminent.

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**Flood Potential Outlook** - Issued when forecasted meteorological conditions indicate a significant heavy rainfall event may occur that would either cause flooding or aggravate an existing flooding situation. This long range outlook is usually issued 36-72 hours outlook prior to an event.

**Hazardous Weather Outlook** - The outlook is given when forecasters believe significant weather conditions are possible. An outlook is usually issued 48-72 hours in advance of an event.

**Short Term Forecast** - Describes the weather in the local area and includes a short-range forecast (usually not more than six hours). This product will be updated more frequently when it is used during active weather. A short-term forecast is sometimes referred to as a "**NOW-cast.**"

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## WATCHES

- **The potential exists for a dangerous weather event.**
- **Action:** Prepare for the weather event; listen for additional information, including warnings.

**Excessive Heat Watch** - Issued when excessive heat is possible. Heat indexes are forecast at 115 degrees or higher for a period of three hours or more.

**Fire Weather Watch** - Issued for the possible development of conditions favorable for forest, grass or brush fires.

**Flash Flood Watch** - A Flash Flood Watch will be issued for potential *rapid* flooding from either torrential downpours, dam breaks, or ice jam breaks. They are usually issued up to 12 hours prior to a possible flash flood event.

**Flood Watch** - A Flood Watch will be issued when the potential for flooding exists. The onset of flooding is much slower, usually greater than six hours, than a flash flood. They are usually issued up to 12 hours prior to the possible flood event.

**High Wind Watch** - Issued when there is a potential for dangerous winds.

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** - A Severe Thunderstorm Watch outlines an area where hail up to ¾-inch in diameter or larger, and damaging thunderstorm winds are expected to occur. In rare situations, the enhanced wording, "this is a particularly dangerous situation" will be used to describe extreme thunderstorm activity.

**Tornado Watch** - A Tornado Watch outlines an area where large hail and damaging wind threats, as well as the possibility of multiple tornadoes are possible. In rare situations, the enhanced wording, "this is a particularly dangerous situation" will be used when long-lived, strong and violent tornadoes are possible.

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## WARNINGS

- **A dangerous weather event is imminent.**
- **Action:** Take action immediately to protect life and property.

**Excessive Heat Warning** - Issued when heat indexes will reach 115 degrees or higher for a period of three hours or more.

**Flash Flood Warning** - This warning signifies a short duration of *intense/rapid* flooding of counties, communities, streams, or urban areas. Flash floods may result from such things as torrential downpours, dam breaks, or ice jam breaks.

**Action:** Take action immediately - move to higher ground, do not drive through flooded roadways.

**Flash Flood Statement** - This product is issued after either a *Flash Flood Watch* or a *Flash Flood Warning*. It will provide the latest information on the flash flooding situation or event.

**Flood Warning** - This warning signifies a longer duration and more gradual flooding of counties, communities, streams, or urban areas. Floods usually begin after six hours of excessive rainfall.

**Flood Statement** - This product is issued after either a *Flood Watch* or a *Flood Warning*. It will provide the latest information on the flash flooding situation or event.

**High Wind Warning** - issued for when sustained winds will be 40 mph or greater for at least one hour, or any gust of wind expected to be 58 mph or greater.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** - Issued when large hail or damaging wind is actually occurring or imminent. Severe thunderstorms can produce tornadoes with little or no advance warning. Severe thunderstorms will also produce frequent and dangerous lightning.

**Action:** Seek safe shelter immediately. **Criteria:** Hail - ¾" or larger; Wind - 58 mph or greater.

**Severe Weather Statement** - Provides follow up information on severe weather conditions (severe thunderstorm or tornadoes) which have occurred or are currently occurring.

**Special Marine Warning** - Issued for any of the hazardous maritime weather conditions; thunderstorms over water; thunderstorms that will move over water; cold air funnels over water; or waterspouts usually two hours or less and producing sustained winds or frequent gusts of 34 knots or more.

**Action:** Boaters should move to safe harbor.

**Red Flag Warning** - Issued when extreme burning conditions are forecasted. Forecasting criteria includes relative humidity, wind and temperature.

**Action:** No open burning.

**River Flood Warning** - A warning issued for specific communities or areas along a river where flooding is imminent or occurring. River Flood Warnings will provide crest forecasts.

**Action:** move to higher ground; do not drive through flooded roadways

**Tornado Warning** - Issued when a tornado is imminent or occurring. This includes when a tornado is indicated by Doppler radar or sighted by spotters.

**Action:** Seek safe shelter immediately.

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## ADVISORIES

- **Advisories are for conditions less serious than warnings, and cause significant inconvenience. If caution is not exercised, weather advisories could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.**

**Dense Fog Advisory** - issued when widespread fog will reduce visibility to one-fourth mile or less.

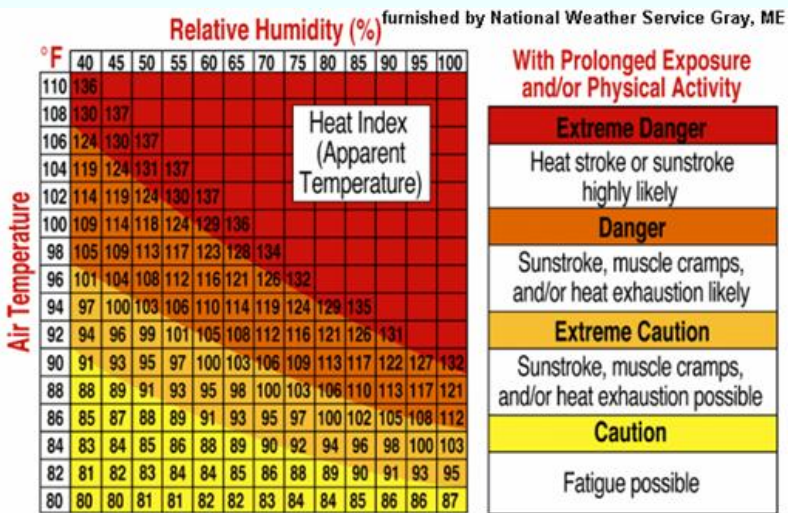
**Freezing Fog Advisory** - issued when fog may reduce visibilities to less than one-fourth mile. In addition, the fog will freeze on exposed surfaces and cause black ice formation on roadways, bridges and sidewalks.

**Action:** Drivers should slow down and use their headlights.

**Heat Index (Apparent Temperature)** - A number in degrees Fahrenheit that indicates how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. Exposure to direct sunlight can increase the heat index by 15 degrees.

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## NWS Heat Index Chart:



**Heat Advisory** - issued when heat index is expected to reach at least 100°F but less than 105°F, or when nighttime lows are expected to remain above 80°F.

**Urban & Small Stream Flood Advisory** - This advisory alerts the public to flooding which is generally an inconvenience. This advisory is issued when heavy rain is predicted to cause flooding of streets and low-lying places in urban areas. It is also used if small rural or urban streams are expected to reach or exceed their banks.

**Wind Advisory** - issued when sustained winds are expected to be 40 mph or greater for at least an hour, or any wind gust between 45 mph and 57 mph.

## **WEATHER TERMS**

### **Cold Air Funnels**

Weak funnel cloud extensions from cumulous clouds that typically remain aloft. Cold air funnels form in cold, unstable air masses and are not usually associated with thunderstorms or severe weather.

### **Downburst**

Intense gust of wind or downdraft that exits the base of a thunderstorm and spreads out horizontally at the earth's surface as a strong wind that often causes damage.

### **Flash Flood**

A flood that can occur very rapidly. Flash floods occur as the result of very heavy rainfall in a short period of time, generally over a relatively small area.

### **Flood**

A condition that occurs when water overflows the natural or artificial confines of a stream or body of water, or accumulates by drainage over low lying areas.

### **Funnel Cloud**

Violently rotating column of air that is not in contact with the ground. A tornado passes through the funnel cloud stage during its development and dissipation.

### **Gust Front**

The leading edge of a mass of cool, gusty air that flows from the base of a thunderstorm and spreads along the ground in advance of the thunderstorm.

### **Lightning**

Generally, any and all of the various forms of electrical discharge produced by thunderstorms.

### **Severe Thunderstorm**

A thunderstorm producing a tornado, damaging winds of 58 mph or higher, and/or hail  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter or larger.

### **Squall Line**

Any line or narrow band of thunderstorms. These lines may be of considerable length, extending across multiple states.

### **Straight-Line Winds**

Thunderstorm winds that may product damage that typically exhibits a lack of a rotational damage pattern. Straight-line winds are most often produced by a thunderstorm gust front, originating from a downburst.

### **Thunderstorm**

In general, a local storm produced by a cumulonimbus cloud, and accompanied by lightning and thunder, usually with strong wind gusts, heavy rain and sometimes hail. A cumulonimbus cloud is a cauliflower-shaped cloud that has a height taller than or equal to its width.

### **Tornado**

A violently rotating column of air that comes in contact with the ground, many times, descending from the base of a severe thunderstorm. Tornadoes are usually funnel-shaped with the narrow end nearest the ground. In Ohio, most tornadoes are obscured by hills, trees and rain.