



# NWS Dodge City Spotter Reference Guide

## WHAT TO REPORT



**Tornadoes**  
**Funnel Clouds**  
**Wall Clouds** (specify if rotating)



**Hail** (any size)  
Severe hail is quarter size (1") or larger. Find the largest stone and measure its widest diameter. Or relate its size to common objects, as shown below. Do not reference *marble size*.

|       |                |       |             |
|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| 1/4"  | Pea            | 1.75" | Golf ball   |
| 3/4"  | Penny          | 2"    | Hen egg     |
| 7/8"  | Nickel         | 2.5"  | Tennis ball |
| 1"    | Quarter        | 2.75" | Baseball    |
| 1.25" | Half dollar    | 4"    | Softball    |
| 1.5"  | Ping pong ball | 4.5"  | Grapefruit  |



**Strong Winds** (40 mph or stronger)  
Measured wind speeds are preferred. Specify if reported winds are estimated (see back).



**Wind Damage**  
Report any structure or tree damage, even if you discover it up to a week later. Downed trees/limbs 3" or larger in diameter generally indicate severe winds (58 mph or stronger). Give detail on size and whether trees were healthy or rotted, snapped or uprooted, etc.



**Flooding**  
**Mudslides**  
**Heavy Rainfall** (1+ inches)  
Report any high water, specifying whether it is standing or rushing. Also report mudslides, washed out roads, rivers/streams out of their banks, high water evacuations/rescues, water entering main levels of homes/businesses, etc.



**Winter Weather**  
Report storm total snow/ice measurements, blowing/drifting snow, dense fog, etc.



**Weather-Related Fatality/Injury**

## HOW TO REPORT

Submit a report to NWS Dodge City via any of the means below. **Urgent reports should always be communicated by **phone****, but keep your report concise so you don't tie up the line.



620-225-6514



[inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report](https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report)



@NWSDodgeCity



[nws.dodgecity@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.dodgecity@noaa.gov)

## Include the following details:

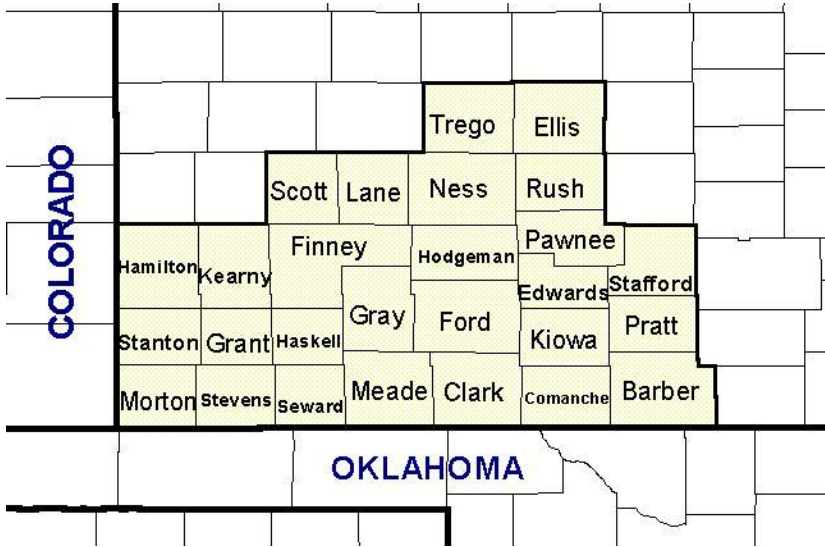
- **WHO** you are (trained spotter)
- **WHAT** you observed (photos/videos are very helpful and can be sent to NWS La Crosse via social media or email!)
- **WHERE** the weather occurred AND your exact location; distance/direction to nearby town preferred (e.g., *4 mi SE Dodge*)
- **WHEN** the weather event occurred

## If uncertain what you're seeing:

Sometimes even expert storm spotters have a difficult time determining exactly what they're observing, but that's no reason to withhold a report!

The key is to take time to clearly assess, then provide specific details of exactly what you see. Don't make assumptions or exaggerate, but do explain why you're uncertain. For example, you spot a funnel cloud but trees block your view of the horizon. You should report it as a funnel cloud and also mention you can't see if there's debris because of the trees in the way.

## NWS DDC County Warning Area



## GUIDELINES

- Spotter reports are most effective when received in real-time. It is desirable for thunderstorm hazards to be reported *before* they reach severe thresholds.
- SAFETY FIRST!
  - Do not put yourself or others in harm's way for the sake of a report. Wait to report until you can do so safely.
  - Be especially cautious at night.
  - Stay inside your vehicle for protection.
  - Do not attempt to cross flooded roads.
  - Spot in pairs and have escape routes.
- Be proactive and remain alert to the latest upstream conditions and radar trends.
- Spotters are encouraged to attend training every 1-2 years.

## ESTIMATING WIND SPEEDS

- 25-30 MPH** Large branches move
- 30-40 MPH** Whole trees move
- 40-45 MPH** Small branches break; walking impeded
- 45-55 MPH** Medium branches break; slight structural damage occurs
- 55-65 MPH** Large limbs break; shallow-rooted trees blow over; considerable structural damage occurs
- 65-75 MPH** Widespread damage; large trees blown over or uprooted; substantial structural damage
- 75+ MPH** Severe/extensive destruction; corn flattened; trees uprooted; windows broken

## SHELF VS. WALL CLOUD

| SHELF CLOUD                 | WALL CLOUD               |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Indicates downdraft/outflow | Indicates updraft/inflow |
| Leading edge of storm       | Near rear of storm       |
| Slopes away from rain       | Slopes toward rain       |
| Spans much of horizon       | Isolated lowering        |
| <b>Do NOT report</b>        | <b>DO report!</b>        |

## HELPFUL REFERENCES

- NWS Dodge City Webpage:** [weather.gov/DDC](http://weather.gov/DDC)
- NWS Dodge City Spotter Page:** [weather.gov/ddc/skywarn](http://weather.gov/ddc/skywarn)
- NWS Storm Prediction Center:** [spc.noaa.gov](http://spc.noaa.gov)
- mPING Reporting App:** [mping.nssl.noaa.gov](http://mping.nssl.noaa.gov)
- CoCoRaHS:** [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org)
- Spotter Field Guide (mobile):** [weather.gov/spotterguide](http://weather.gov/spotterguide)



Spotter Field Guide!

