

Weather Hazards on the Water

Even if the current weather is nice, it is best to check the forecast before you hit the water. There are multiple weather hazards to be aware of that can have a significant impact on your safety!

Surface Fronts can bring:

- ⇒ Significant wind shifts and potentially stronger winds with/behind the front
- ⇒ A focus for thunderstorm development
- ⇒ A focus for waterspout development (mainly late summer/fall for the Great Lakes)

Thunderstorms can bring:

- ⇒ Strong winds with and/or ahead of the storm along with wind shifts
- ⇒ Hail
- ⇒ Lightning
- ⇒ Waterspouts
- ⇒ Torrential rain reducing visibility

Strong winds can cause:

- ⇒ High waves creating hazardous conditions for boaters and beachgoers (currents)

Additional hazards:

- ⇒ Fog – vessels, hazards, and swimmers difficult to see
- Cold Water – can be deadly by causing hypothermia

Make sure you have a plan to get to safe harbor before hazardous weather hits!

Weather Service Offices Across The Great Lakes

NWS Duluth, MN

nws.duluth@noaa.gov • 218-729-6697

NWS Marquette, MI

nws.marquette@noaa.gov • 906-457-5212

NWS Green Bay, WI

nws.greenbay@noaa.gov • 920-494-2363

NWS Milwaukee/Sullivan, WI

nws.milwaukee@noaa.gov • 262-965-2074

NWS Chicago, IL

nws.chicago@noaa.gov • 815-834-1435

NWS Northern Indiana

nws.northernindiana@noaa.gov • 574-834-1104

NWS Grand Rapids, MI

nws.gradrapids@noaa.gov • 616-949-0643

NWS Gaylord, MI

nws.gaylord@noaa.gov • 989-731-3384

NWS Detroit, MI

nws.detroit@noaa.gov • 248-620-9804

NWS Cleveland, OH

nws.cleveland@noaa.gov • 216-416-2900

NWS Buffalo, NY

nws.buffalo@noaa.gov • 716-565-0204



Practicing Safe Boating with Weather Resources



Where to Find the Latest Forecast

Inland Lake Forecast

Forecasts information for lakes in Southern Wisconsin can be found at:

weather.gov/mkx/inland-lake-waves

Lake Michigan

Forecast information for Lake Michigan's nearshore and open waters at:

weather.gov/mkx/local-marine

Across the Great Lakes

Find forecast information through visual maps, tabular, and graph format for any of the Great Lakes at:

weather.gov/greatlakes

Ocean and Gulf Coasts

Find forecast information for areas along the ocean and gulf coasts in the United States at:

weather.gov/marine



Situational Awareness & Safety

Practice situational awareness by checking the forecast before you go and having a way to get weather updates while on the water!

NOAA Weather Radio

Forecasts are transmitted 24/7 and if a Special Marine Warning is issued the radio will alert and start playing.

Weather Radio Frequencies

162.400 MHz	162.475 MHz
162.425 MHz	162.500 MHz
162.450 MHz	162.525 MHz
	162.550 MHz

Find your local frequency!

weather.gov/nwr/station_listing

Weather & Radar Apps

Can help you remain situationally aware if you have cell service and if available can notify you when warnings are issued.

Safety Kit

- Lifejacket "Don't Just Bring It, Wear It!"
- Visual Distress Signals
- Sound Producing Devices
- First Aid Kit



Watches, Warnings, Advisories

Small Craft Advisory - sustained winds or gusts of 22 to 33 knots and/or waves averaging 4 feet or higher

Gale Watch/Warning - sustained winds or gusts of 34 to 47 knots

Storm Watch/Warning - sustained winds or gusts of 48 to 63 knots

Hurricane Force Wind Watch/Warning - sustained winds or gusts of 64 knots or greater

Heavy Freezing Spray Watch/Warning - accumulation of freezing spray on a vessel at a rate of 2cm/hr or greater

Dense Fog Advisory - Widespread or localized fog reducing visibilities to 1NM or less

Low Water Advisory - water levels are significantly below average and may cause impact to safe navigation

What does a *Watch* mean? Hazardous conditions may occur during the specified time period.

What does a *Warning* mean? Hazardous conditions are ongoing or imminent during the specified time period.