

Change in Minimum Severe Thunderstorm Hail Size Criteria **Effective January 4, 2010, at 6 PM CST**

NWS Forecast Offices (WFO) will operationally change the minimum hail size criterion used to issue Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and follow-up Severe Weather Statements from 3/4 inch (also known as “penny size”) diameter or larger hail to **1 inch** (also known as “quarter size”) diameter or larger hail.

No change is being made to the Severe Thunderstorm Warning wind criteria, which will remain at 50 knots (58 mph) or higher, or damage to man-made or natural structures consistent with these wind speeds.

A Public Information Statement soliciting comments regarding this change was issued September 23, 2009, and can be found at

http://www.weather.gov/os/notification/pns09_1_inch_hail.txt

The National Weather Service (NWS) received 63 comments in response to the above statement, 54 of which supported this change (86 percent). A web page will be available beginning **December 15th** to address all comments, since some comments in the original survey indicated a need for additional outreach. This page will be available at <http://weather.gov> and will be publicized via another Public Information Statement.

NWS reviewed all comments before deciding to raise the minimum hail size criterion.

WFOs in the NWS Central Region (stretching from Kentucky and Indiana west to Colorado and Wyoming, and north to the Canadian border) and Western Region (from Arizona and California northward to the Pacific northwest coast) have been issuing Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and follow-up statements experimentally using the 1 inch diameter criterion for most of calendar year 2009. Some details on the experiment can be found at

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/scn09-19hail_change.txt

and at

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/scn09-36wr_hail_exp.txt

These offices will continue to issue 1 inch hail size Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and follow-up statements, *experimentally*, through January 4, 2010. All NWS WFOs will adopt the new criterion operationally on January 5, 2010.

For further information regarding this change please contact:

John T. Ferree
Fire and Public Weather Services Branch
120 David L. Boren Blvd., Suite 2312
Norman, OK 73072
405-325-2209
john.t.ferree@noaa.gov

Or

Barry S. Goldsmith
Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service Brownsville, Texas
20 S. Vermillion Rd.
Brownsville, TX 78521
956-504-1432
barry.goldsmith@noaa.gov

All National Service Change Notices are online at:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/notif.htm>