

## Beware of Tornado Look-alikes

Scud clouds are perhaps the most common feature mistaken for tornadoes. They are low, ragged cloud fragments that can sometimes be located near the updraft region of the storm. However, they lack organized, persistent rotation. Here are a couple of examples of scud clouds.



There are several other features, some associated with an actual storm and others that are not, that can also be mistaken for a tornado.



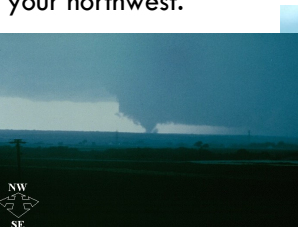
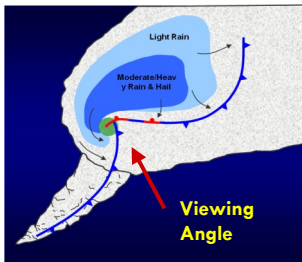
Rainshaft - also lacks organized rotation about a vertical axis



Upward directed shadow cast on a higher cloud deck by a low cloud eclipsing the setting sun.


## Best Angle for Viewing a Tornado

Position is *extremely* important when viewing a possible tornadic thunderstorm. You should be to the **southeast** of the storm when viewing a tornado. Therefore, the storm should be to your northwest.

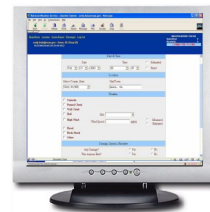


## How to Report Severe Weather

There are several options available when it comes to reporting severe weather to the National Weather Service Office in Birmingham, AL. Whether you are on the road, at home, or in your office, there is a quick and easy way to get your report to us.

- Call your local Emergency Management Office
- Call local law enforcement/ 911 Service
- Go to [www.weather.gov/bmx](http://www.weather.gov/bmx) and click on "Submit Storm Report" on the left-hand menu
- Post it on our Facebook wall. Search for **NWSBirmingham**, and "Like" us! 
- Twitter: **@NWSBirmingham** Include **#bmxwx** and/or **#alwx** 
- Central Alabama IM Spotter Chat: <http://www.alert-alabama.org/spotterchat/>
- Email: **SR-BMX.StormReports@noaa.gov**
- You may also send any damage or severe weather photos to the following email address: **SR-BMX.pix@noaa.gov**

A major contribution to the success of our severe weather warning program is the receipt of storm reports from all our customers and partners across Central Alabama.



465 Weathervane Rd Calera, AL 35040  
Phone: 205-664-3010 Fax: 205-664-7821  
[www.weather.gov/bmx](http://www.weather.gov/bmx)

## NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE



## Storm Spotter Quick Reference



The Eyes & Ears of the  
National Weather Service

W F O B I R M I N G H A M , A L

# Reporting Severe Weather

When reporting severe weather, the National Weather Service needs as much detail in the information as possible. Here is a quick list of the pertinent information to pass along to us:

- **LOCATION** of the severe weather event

- Reference to the nearest town, major cross streets, address
- GPS coordinates if available

- **TIME** of the weather event and/or the report

- Not necessarily the current time, unless the event is ongoing

- **DESCRIPTION** of the weather event

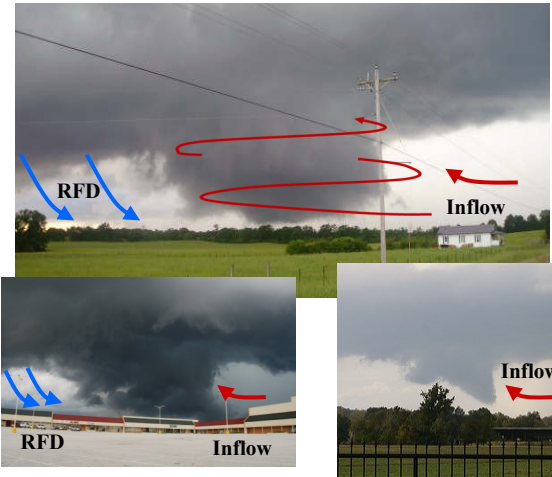
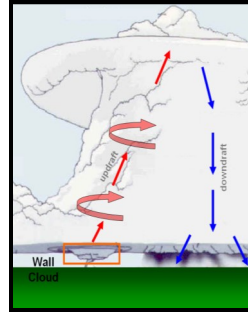
- Tornado/funnel cloud
- Rotating wall cloud
- Flash flooding
- Damaging winds ( $\geq 60$  mph)
- Large hail (1 inch or larger)
- Persistent non-rotating wall cloud
- Heavy rainfall (1 inch per hour or more)
- Small hail ( $\leq \frac{3}{4}$  inch)
- Strong winds ( $< 60$  mph)
- Other cloud structures

Increasing Urgency

The higher up on this list, the more urgent it is to submit your report.

## Wall Clouds (Inflow)

- A localized, persistent lowering of the cloud from the rainfree base
- Normally found on the south/southwest (inflow) side of the thunderstorm
- May exhibit rapid upward and downward motion, as well as rotation



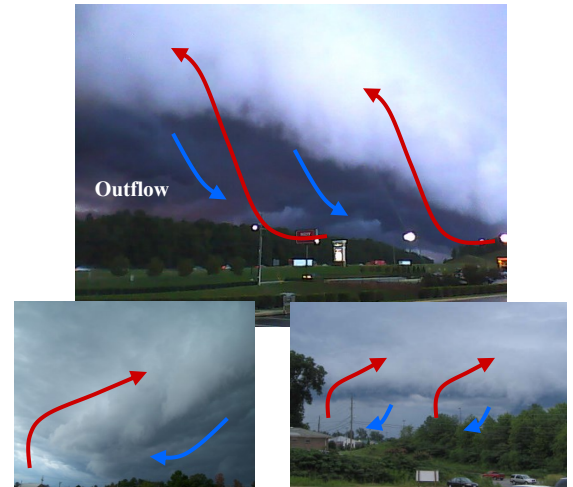
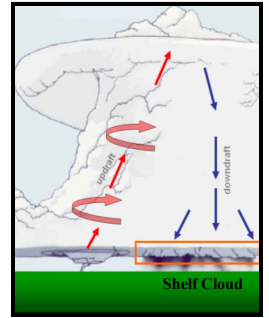
## Wall Cloud vs. Shelf Cloud

Wall Clouds	Shelf Clouds
Suggest updraft and inflow	Suggest downdraft and outflow
Maintain position with respect to precip area	Move away from precip area
Slope upward away from precip	Slope downward away from precip

Just remember that wall clouds are associated with **inflow**, while shelf clouds are associated with **outflow**.

## Shelf Cloud (Outflow)

- More common than wall clouds, especially in the summer
- Associated with cool outflow
- May be turbulent, but lack persistent, organized rotation



## Spotter Safety Tips

- If in your car and a tornado is near, do **NOT** take shelter underneath an overpass!
- If caught outdoors and unable to seek shelter inside a sturdy structure, then you have a decision to make...either take refuge in a low-lying ditch, covering your head, or remain in your vehicle, put your head below the windows and cover your head.

**THIS IS A LAST RESORT!!**

Do not put yourself in a position to have to make that decision.