



Media release

12 June 2024

MetService and NEMA team up to help people better prepare for severe weather

From 12 June, MetService will provide additional information in its severe weather warnings to help people better understand the impact of incoming weather and what actions to take to stay safe.

The partnership draws on the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)'s advice and expertise on how to respond to and prepare for emergencies and the real time insights about impending severe weather from the team of expert forecasters at MetService.

MetService Severe Weather Manager, William Nepe says, "We have always had a close working relationship with the emergency management community. This initiative further aligns our advice when impactful weather such as heavy rain, strong wind or heavy snow is on its way.

"We know that extreme weather will continue to strike New Zealand, and in the last two years we've seen just how destructive it can be."

"We hope that by providing practical advice people will feel empowered to act and be weather ready."

NEMA's Director Civil Defence Emergency Management John Price says, "Adding preparedness advice to severe weather information provides everyone with the information they need in one place."

"MetService is the official provider of severe weather information, and their popular website and app are a trusted source of information. NEMA is the government lead for emergency management, empowering people and communities before, during and after emergencies."

"We encourage everyone to heed the advice we're jointly providing. It is tailored for different types of weather and severity, for example clearing drains and gutters in preparation of heavy rain, staying out of floodwaters, and securing items that can be picked up by strong winds," says John Price.

In addition to action advice, MetService Warnings will also now include impact statements to help people better understand the effects a particular level of rain, wind or snow can cause.

“Combined, these impact and action statements will give people a real sense of just how severe the forecast weather could be. Whether it could be life threatening, what disruptions it may cause such as to power or transport networks, or what damage may result such as to trees or powerlines and slips,” says William.

Another feature has also been added - the chance that a Watch or Orange Warning will be upgraded to a higher level of severity.

“This lets people know the likelihood (high, moderate, low, or minimal) that the weather could become more severe or that a higher-level warning will follow. This will provide more reason to keep up to date with the forecast”, adds William.

These features are one of the steps MetService is taking to make our warning information more actionable and easier to understand, helping to support a more effective and timely response to severe weather.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR

- **Action statements** with practical steps you can take to be weather ready. This advice is informed by the National Emergency Management Agency and tailored for different types of weather and severity. For Watches the action will only appear if there is a ‘high’ chance the Watch will be upgraded to a Warning.
- **Impact statements** to better explain what the forecast weather could do. These will appear on all Warnings. Additionally, it will appear in Watches when there is a ‘high’ chance of upgrade to a Warning.
- **Chance of the Watch or Orange Warning** being upgraded has been added to the forecast. This lets you know the likelihood (high, moderate, low, or minimal) that the weather could become more severe or that a higher-level warning will follow - making it clear when it is critical to keep up to date with the forecast.