

Post-tornado interview questions

This document contains questions that could be asked of NWS forecasters, broadcast meteorologists, emergency management personnel, and members of the public. Note that *not all questions* will be asked of each interviewee. These are meant as guiding questions to choose from based on each individual circumstance. A total of 5-10 questions will be asked of each interviewee.

General questions to ask before asking about the specific event of interest:

- Are there any geopolitical boundaries (like states/counties/EM jurisdictions/CWA boundaries/etc.) that impact your severe weather operations?
 - Can you give us an example?
- What populations are you most concerned about during tornado events?
- How many WFOs do you monitor for forecast and warning information?
 - Which one(s)?
- How does your geographic location impact your storm monitoring abilities?
- From your perspective, does the time of year impact the awareness of possible severe weather?
 - Internally?
 - Externally?
- What kind of training have you had to prepare for severe weather events in your jurisdiction?
- Was this your first tornado experience?
- Where do you get information about the weather?
 - Are there certain mediums or times that you look for this information?
- Do you need to do anything as part of your profession/job for tornadoes?
- If so, what do you think about or do in preparation for the storm?
- What do you communicate about weather during a tornado, either as part of your job or personally for friends or family?

Questions about the specific event of interest:

- How far ahead of time did you become aware that severe weather was possible?
- Where were you when the storms affected your location?
 - (If at home) Describe your current primary residence.
 - (If at a business) Describe the business.
 - (If at work) Describe your work setting.
 - Did you feel confident that this location would protect you from severe injuries?
- Please describe what was going on when the tornado was happening
 - Where were you? What were you doing?
 - Did you get a warning right before the tornado occurred?
- Now think back to a few hours beforehand. What were you thinking about?
 - Were you preparing for a tornado? If so, how?
 - Did you get a tornado watch in the hours before the tornado occurred?
- Were you aware of the possibility of a tornado the day before it happened?
 - If you were aware, what were you doing the day before the tornado in anticipation of the storm?
- Describe your operational setting during this severe weather event.

- Were jobs divided up or was everyone doing all jobs? For example, did you have some people forecasting and others communicating?
- Did you make any adjustments for upcoming operations for this event?
 - Like staffing changes?
- Where were you getting weather information from?
- How far ahead of time were you communicating the risk of severe weather?
- Who were you communicating with about the risk of severe weather/tornadoes?
- What mediums (e.g., social media, websites, live TV crawls, etc.) did you use to communicate the risk for this event?
- What types of information were you communicating?
 - Or products?
- Is there a particular mode of communication that you found most successful during this event?
 - With partners/EMs?
 - With members of the public?
- Was there anything unique about the way you communicated the risk for this particular event?
 - For example, did you reach out to any partners specifically? Did someone reach out to you?
- What actions did your office either take directly or help to coordinate as storms approached?
 - Who was your primary audience or stakeholders?
 - Did you communicate directly to the public?
- How was your office interacting with surrounding WFOs during this event?
 - Is this pretty typical?
- What actions did you take during this time?
 - What kinds of actions did you recommend others take during this period, if any?
- What decisions did you make during this time period, if any?
- How did you monitor the progress of storms?
- Was there any point in time when you felt overwhelmed by the volume of questions/requests you were receiving?
- A Tornado Watch is issued by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. It does not mean that they will occur. It only means they are possible.
 - Do you recall hearing that there was a watch?
 - (If Yes) How did you hear about it?
 - (If Yes) Did you do anything in response to learning about the tornado watch?
 - What did you do?
- A Tornado Warning is issued by the National Weather Service when a tornado is imminent. When this alert is issued, seek safe shelter immediately.
 - Do you recall hearing that there was a tornado warning?
 - (If Yes) How did you hear about it?
 - (If Yes) Did you do anything in response to learning about the tornado warning?
 - What did you do?
 - (if they sheltered) Did you feel safe in that location?

Questions to ask after asking about the specific event of interest:

General:

- Was there one source or voice in particular that you relied on or trusted during this event?
- Was there a particular forecast or graphic that stands out in your memory that you felt did an especially good job of conveying the potential severe weather threat?
- Was there ever a point in time where you thought, "I might have to do something?"
 - If yes, when was it?
- Are there any other aspects of this event that you found particularly interesting or unusual?
 - Or anything out of the ordinary?
- Overall, do you feel like you had enough information in advance of the tornado event to make appropriate decisions?
 - (If no) What additional information would you have liked to have?
- Was there anything that prevented you from making decisions or taking action?
- Is there a particular mode of communication that you found most successful during this event?
 - E.g., cell phone alerts, TV, NWSChat, email, etc.?
- Was there anything you wanted to communicate during this event but couldn't?
 - Why?
 - Was there a lack of information?
 - Or lack of tool/medium to communicate the information?
- Did the event change any of your approaches to future severe weather events?
- Knowing what you know now, is there anything you wish you would have done differently?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in this event?

Professionals:

- How long did you provide coverage for the threat of tornadoes (e.g., how long was the threat present in your viewing area)?
 - How long were you wall-to-wall?
 - How long were you doing cut ins?
- Did you feel that you were receiving information from the NWS in a timely manner?
 - If not, can you give an example of when you did not receive information quick enough?
- Did your office receive feedback from anyone (partners, members of the public, etc.) about this event?
 - If so, what was the feedback?
- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not prepared at all and 10 being completely prepared, how prepared were people in your area for severe weather?
 - Why did you choose that number?
- Is there any kind of additional support that you would like to see from either the National Weather Service or partners that would make your job easier/more effective?

Individuals/members of the public:

- What is your gender?
- What is your age?
- What is your race/ethnicity?
- What is your household income?
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not prepared at all and 10 being completely prepared, how prepared were you for severe weather?
 - Why did you choose that number?