



Hamilton County  
Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security

## Knowing the difference between a watch and a warning

In the event severe weather breaks in your area, you should know the difference between a watch and a warning. Knowing the difference can help you to take the necessary actions when severe weather threatens.

Watches and Warnings are issued in two different entities.

A **Watch** means there is **potential** for hazardous weather. During a Watch, one should have a plan of action and pay close attention to weather updates. A Watch usually includes a larger area than a warning such as:

- Flood Watch
- Severe Thunderstorm
- Tornado Watch

A **Warning** means the weather event is **imminent or occurring**, and weather could pose a threat to life and/or property. One should take action immediately when a warning is issued. Warnings are issued for a distinct area that is threatened such as:

- Flood Warning
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning
- Tornado Warning