

Public Opinion Research on Weather Services and Awareness Information

Prepared for Environment and Climate Change Canada

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Nadeau", is written over a light gray, textured rectangular background.

March 11, 2026

Rick Nadeau, President

Quorus Consulting Group Inc.

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Executive summary

Background

The Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is working on several initiatives to improve and modernize weather information and awareness services for Canadians. These range from simplifying the number and type of hazard alerts, giving a heads-up about severe weather over longer timeframes, and new ways of displaying forecast information on the WeatherCAN app and weather.gc.ca.

MSC wants to collect feedback from members of the public about their understanding of uncertainty (i.e. a longer timeframe heads-up), their reaction to simplification of alert types, and what kind of contextual information helps them make daily decisions around weather. As these topics are still only proposals and not physical concepts, focus groups seem ideal for presenting the information and assessing reactions of Canadians. Feedback can then inform the evolution of these proposals over the coming months.

Canada's changing climate, the advances in global weather technological capabilities, and the way Canadians have shifted how they access and communicate information means the MSC must adapt its products and services for the future. Compounded by resource constraints, the MSC needs to ensure that it can continue to be successful in its mission to provide Canadians and their institutions with authoritative, timely, reliable and accurate information on weather and environmental conditions to enable them to make informed decisions affecting their lives.

Serving ECCC's mandate to "equip Canadians to make informed decisions on weather, water and climate conditions", the research aims to get a sense from Canadians of their use and understanding of the MSC weather and alerting systems and their reaction to proposed service improvements.

Some of the proposed service improvements include:

- Reducing the number of hazards alerted; for example, there are individual alerts for freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and flash freeze – which could be consolidated to something like a surface ice or icy conditions alert.
- Reducing the number of alerting types – currently there are watches, warnings, advisories and statements. Fewer might be simpler and allow the message to be received and acted upon more quickly.
- MSC has the data to provide a much earlier heads-up on severe weather than is currently shared under the alerting system. Earlier timeframes do however come with increased

uncertainty. Should it provide this data, how well understood is the uncertainty level in the advance timeframe, and how best to access this information could be asked of Canadians.

- With text content, what is the critical information read by Canadians? This could be in alert text, or in forecast text. Part of the new forecast information is a concept called the Weather Story – what content if any is of interest and would be understood?

Research objectives

The objective of the research was to understand Canadians' use and understanding of the MSC weather and alerting systems and their reactions to proposed service improvements.

Specifically, the research objectives were as follows:

1. Scope alert simplification ideas with Canadians
 - a. Fewer types and fewer hazard groupings
 - b. Pushing vs pulling of alerts that aren't warnings
2. Verify Canadians' understanding of a weather outlook, that would give advance notice of severe weather
 - a. Concept of uncertainty / forecaster confidence
 - b. Place of an outlook in the alerting spectrum
 - c. Useful content of an outlook that would support decision-making
3. Assess Canadians' preferences for text-based weather information
 - a. Pushed or pulled information
 - b. Identify what other information is needed for their decision-making related to weather
 - c. Use, understanding and order of text information

Methodology

The research methodology consisted of 10 online focus groups with individuals in Canada. The focus groups were held between January 26 and February 9, 2026, and included individuals from across the country. Focus groups were segmented by region and use of weather information (general use and professional use). Each focus group session lasted approximately 90 minutes. Participants were informed upfront that the research was being conducted on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Participants from the general population received an honorarium of \$125 while those in the professional segment received an honorarium of \$150 for their participation. In total, 78 individuals participated in the research.

Research results

Experiences with weather information

A large majority of participants described using their smartphones to access weather information. Several also use websites when looking for weather information, either through a mobile browser or on a laptop.

Many participants explained that they use the default weather app that comes pre-installed on their device, mainly due to convenience. Other commonly used sources include The Weather Network, The Weather Channel app, AccuWeather, and Government of Canada sources such as the Environment Canada website (weather.gc.ca) and mobile app (WeatherCAN).

Government of Canada weather sources are commonly used in addition to other apps or websites, and often when looking for a greater level of detail and accuracy. The radar feature was said to be useful for those planning outdoor activities as well as for professionals making work-related decisions. The most common critique of the Environment Canada website was its location precision. Some explained that the website did not provide weather information for their precise location, instead showing conditions from the nearest airport or nearby town.

Hazard Simplification

Participants were informed that the Government of Canada is planning on simplifying weather alerts by consolidating alert types based on categories related to the impact of the hazard. A list of the current hazards was shown followed by the proposed, consolidated list.

Many participants responded favourably to the consolidated categories and the increased focus on impacts within the alerts, noting that this approach would help people better understand what actions they may need to take to stay prepared. Several felt that the original list of alert types was somewhat overwhelming and that streamlining the categories made sense. The sentiment among this group was often summarized as “the simpler, the better.”

It was said that clearly identifying the impacts of a weather event could be especially helpful for newer Canadians who may be less familiar with Canadian weather patterns, as well as for individuals travelling to or visiting provinces and regions that experience different types of weather than they are familiar with.

At the same time, many participants were somewhat indifferent toward the proposed consolidated alert types. These individuals generally explained that they found the current and proposed examples to be more or less the same and in both alerts the information was clear and easy to understand.

A small proportion of participants expressed a preference for the original approach, perceiving it to be simpler overall. These participants felt that the impacts associated with certain weather events, such as poor visibility during a blizzard, were obvious or implied so listing it felt unnecessary or redundant. Additionally, a few raised questions about how the new approach would address situations in which a single weather event results in multiple impacts.

While the alert was said to be enough to understand the overall impact and weather event, many said they would click to read more details such as when the weather event is expected to start and end. Others would be interested in additional details depending on the type of weather such as amount of precipitation, windchill, wind speeds, precise location affected, etc.

For the most part, participants felt the consolidated list made sense and did not readily identify any other consolidations that could be made to the list of alerts.

[Simplifying alert types](#)

Participants were then given a brief overview of the existing alert types ranging from a Special Weather Statement, a Watch, an Advisory, and a Warning.

Most participants were familiar with the alert types and recalled receiving these alerts in the past. There was interest among some participants to receive notifications for all alert types while others felt that notifications could be limited to more severe instances, such as advisories and warnings. Some noted that these less urgent alerts such as special weather statements could perhaps be made optional for those who wish to receive them.

Additionally, some felt that whether an alert was necessary was dependent on the type of hazard. For instance, in the case of a potential tornado or ice storm, some felt that alerts should be issued as early as the special weather statement stage. In contrast, for hazards such as rain or snow, several participants indicated that notifications could wait until the situation becomes an advisory or warning.

When asked about MetNotes, a minority of participants indicated that they had noticed this feature in the past. However, overall reactions to MetNotes were quite favourable. Participants explained that the added context would be particularly beneficial when planning travel or when trying to better understand specific elements of the forecast. Many agreed that MetNotes should be included in alerts when available while some were indifferent. Only a few explained that MetNotes should only appear once a user clicks on an alert or opens the app or website for more details.

[WRAP \(Weather Risk Awareness Process\)](#)

Most participants check the weather either the day of their plans or one to two days in advance. This tends to support day-to-day decision making and, for professionals, can influence work-related decisions that require roughly 12 to 24 hours' notice. By contrast, others may check the forecast a week or even two weeks ahead, especially travelling or planning outdoor events.

If poor weather is forecast, most make decisions around 24 hours in advance of their planned activity on whether to proceed; however, this often depends on the type of hazard forecasted. Professionals also consider the type of hazard when making work-related decisions as they must balance employee safety with the risk of acting too early.

When making decisions about whether to cancel an event or planned outing, most felt that the more information, the better. Participants said that detailed forecast information becomes more useful as the date gets closer. When looking further ahead, they expect the forecast to change at least somewhat, so they are less likely to focus on the finer details.

When there is an early indication of some severe weather, nearly all suggested that they would follow developments over subsequent days.

The focus groups included an introduction to and discussion about a significant weather outlook. This would be a feature to inform people about severe weather in the forecast. A monochrome image was shown as an example of what the Outlook might look like.

Feedback on the Outlook ranged from mildly positive to negative. The concept of a static image that quickly becomes dated was less appealing to those who are accustomed to dynamic, frequently updated weather information (such as a weather radar map). There was minimal interest in weather information covering large geographic areas, as most are primarily concerned with local conditions. While the idea was appealing to some, these factors limited the perceived value of the tool in its current form.

Many found the visuals of the Outlook busy and not immediately intuitive. Several commented that it is not something that can be quickly glanced at for key information. Similarly, the monochrome colour scheme was frequently described as vague and did not clearly convey differences in severity.

A minority felt the Outlook could be helpful, particularly during seasons associated with more severe weather. Some noted they would be unlikely to use it for routine weather information in their own location but might consult it when travelling, to be aware of potential weather within the broader region.

The most common constructive criticism was that the Outlook would be more effective if it were animated, dynamic, and interactive, similar to radar or satellite imagery. As presented, most participants indicated they would be unlikely to make regular use of it.

Most felt that a formal watch would remain more effective as a heads up for severe weather.

Text-Based Weather Information

Participants were shown a concept where a section of the app and website would use direct output from numerical weather prediction systems to generate the forecast for any point in Canada and feature brief text and a graphic to describe extra context about the weather, upcoming potential severe weather, and educational or safety information related to that location. This concept would feature up to three tabs or banners depending on the story or weather event being featured.

Reactions to the text-based weather information were largely positive. The casual tone and incorporation of the “voice and knowledge of the meteorologists” was widely viewed as a strength, making the information feel approachable, easy to understand, and as though it was coming from a real person rather than an automated system.

Visually, the combination of imagery and written commentary was well regarded, particularly when the imagery added meaningful context, such as satellite visuals. The format of multiple tabs or panels that users could scroll through was also appealing, provided navigation remained efficient and user-friendly.

That said, not all participants felt the product would meet a personal need. A few indicated they would be unlikely to use it regularly, as they do not typically seek this level of detail. Views were mixed on the inclusion of safety advice or educational components. While some saw these as helpful additions, others considered them secondary to core forecast information. Concise examples, such as the wind-focused panel, were preferred by some participants who valued brevity and clarity.

Among those who said they would use this feature, the frequency at which they would do so varied. Some suggested they might check it daily, while others indicated they would be more likely to consult it during periods of severe weather.

When discussing potential story topics, participants showed particular interest in content related to extreme cold, rapid temperature changes, and storm paths. Moderator-probed topics also generated engagement, suggesting there is appetite for explanatory content when it relates directly to impactful or unusual weather.

Qualitative research disclaimer

Qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively projectable measures. The purpose is not to generate “statistics” but to hear the full range of opinions on a topic, understand the language participants use, gauge degrees of passion and engagement and to leverage the power of the group to inspire ideas. Participants are encouraged to voice their opinions, irrespective of whether or not that view is shared by others.

Due to the sample size, the special recruitment methods used, and the study objectives themselves, it is clearly understood that the work under discussion is exploratory in nature. The findings are not, nor were they intended to be, projectable to a larger population.

Specifically, it is inappropriate to suggest or to infer that few (or many) real world users would behave in one way simply because few (or many) participants behaved in this way during the sessions. This kind of projection is strictly the prerogative of quantitative research.

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Detailed Results

Background

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Research results

Experiences with weather information

To begin the focus groups, participants were asked to share how they typically access weather information. All participants check the weather online in some way, however there was a range of those who access weather information fairly infrequently to those who look for updates multiple times a day. Participants also differed in which sources they relied on with many explaining they use multiple sources to compare or to find different information.

A large majority of participants described using their smartphones to access weather information. With that said, several also use websites when looking for weather information, either through a mobile browser or on a laptop. Overall, mobile access is the primary way people stay informed about the weather.

When it comes to specific sources, many participants, especially those in the general population (GenPop) groups explained that they use the default weather app that comes pre-installed on their device (such as Apple Weather, Samsung Weather or Google Weather). Convenience is a key reason for this, with some mentioning that they use a home screen widget for quick daily check-ins to help decide how to dress or what to pack for their day. While some felt that these applications were not the most accurate, they were typically said to be reliable enough for most purposes and some liked that when travelling, their weather app would automatically adjust to their location.

“I just use the one on my phone because it's there when I open it, so it's nice and convenient...it's just there on my home screen.” – Female, 24, Ontario, general population

Other commonly used sources include The Weather Network (via both website and app), The Weather Channel app, AccuWeather, and Government of Canada sources such as the Environment Canada website (weather.gc.ca) and mobile app (WeatherCAN). These sources were often used in combination with each other or in addition to their smartphones default app. Across both segments, some explained that they compare forecasts across multiple sources as different applications or websites often provide very different information and they prefer to get a fuller picture. Additionally, some will use their default smartphone app when looking for general weather information but refer to additional sources such as the Environment Canada website in certain circumstances such as when monitoring severe weather, when planning an outdoor activity or trip as they feel government sources are more accurate and more frequently updated.

“I like to use the weather app that's on my phone, but then when I want more, maybe, reliable or more specific weather readings, I'll go to the government website, the Environment of Canada.” – Female, 24, New Brunswick, general population

“Let's say tomorrow, Google weather would say it is going to rain. But Environment Canada is going to say it's going to be a mix of rain and snow, not just rain. Most of the time, it's the Environment Canada website that is accurate, whereas the Google website, it doesn't always match reality.” – Male, 35, Alberta, professional

In the GenPop groups, a few explained that they will simply do a Google search of weather in their location and refer to whichever website appears first, which was sometimes the Government of Canada website, weather.gc.ca. A few others use local Facebook groups for community-based weather updates or ask their voice assistants such as Alexa or Google for a forecast.

Among professional participants, some also referenced specific websites and applications that they use when looking for specific weather elements or a greater level of detail than what they may find on the sources already mentioned. These websites included Windy, SpotWx, Foreflight and Davis Weatherlink.

Use of Government of Canada weather information

A few participants in each group organically mentioned using Weather.gc.ca (often referred to as “Environment Canada’s weather website”). Use of the WeatherCAN app was less common with a few suggesting the website was just as easy to access on their device rather than downloading an app.

When specifically asked about the website several explained that it is a regular source for them. As mentioned, it is often used in addition to other apps or websites, and often when looking for a greater level of detail and accuracy. In addition to perceived accuracy, participants familiar with the website often used it to get updates or more information on upcoming weather, such as when there is severe weather forecasted. For example, a few said they have used it to follow up on severe weather warnings. There was also a sense of trust in the reliability of the information, given that it is a government source.

[“When we have official decisions to make, if we have to cancel a day of work on site, if we have to cancel certain types of work, we base our decisions on information from Environment Canada's website... In terms of reliability, there's a certain official aspect to it for us. We believe that this is the most [reliable] information, so given that it's a government thing, which is good for us, it carries weight in our decision-making process.”] – Male, 35, Quebec, professional “Quand on a des décisions officielles à prendre, si on doit annuler une journée de chantier, si on doit annuler certains types de travaux, on va se baser sur les informations du site d'environnement Canada... Question de fiabilité, il y a comme un côté officiel pour nous. On se dit que c'est l'information la plus [fiable], donc étant donné que c'est un truc gouvernemental bien pour nous, ça donne un poids dans la balance de notre prise de décision.”

The radar feature was seen as useful especially when participants are searching for details on when precipitation will start and stop, which was useful for those planning outdoor activities such as sports. The radar was also said to be useful for participants in the professional segment who are either unable to work in the rain or are unable to do certain parts of their job if conditions are or will be wet.

"I like the Environment Canada radar. I think it's the most accurate, like, for tracking a thunderstorm coming in, or any kind of precipitation coming in." – Male, 63, Saskatchewan, general population

"In the morning, I'll get the usual television news here in Winnipeg, and they'll give me a broad idea of what might happen. But it's usually not that accurate and it can change so quickly and it affects everything. So, I like using the radar itself to show the patterns of where the wind is going and which way the storm and the clouds are going." – Male, 42, Manitoba, professional

The most common critique of the website was its location precision. Some participants, particularly those in smaller towns or rural areas, explained that the website did not provide weather information for their precise location, instead showing conditions from the nearest airport or nearby town. In some cases, the weather forecasted for the nearby location and the actual weather in their precise location was said to often be significantly different, leading them to utilize other weather sources instead.

"When you pick the location, it picks Halifax. But it's Halifax Stanfield International Airport, so the weather's quite different there than what it is downtown Halifax, so I wish that there was one for, like, downtown Halifax." – Male, 50, Nova Scotia, general population

"It picks up my location being in BC. Because I'm on the other side of the mountain." – Female, 58, Alberta, professional

While the simplicity of the website and app were appreciated by some, a few felt they would appreciate a greater level of detail. For example, some prefer other websites or apps that provide more details about timing of precipitation or wind as well as longer range forecasts, particularly for certain elements such as windchill or "feels like" temperatures. A few made comparisons to the Weather Network, which they felt performs better when it comes to these features.

"I find the Government of Canada one, sometimes it just says, 'windy in the morning', and I'm like, 'Is that it?' [...] How fast? What direction? [Are there] areas that are gonna be better or worse to be in at the time." – Female, 28, Nova Scotia, professional

"I like the Government of Canada app because it's really straightforward... There's no fluff that I have to read through. It tells you temperature, precipitation, when it's gonna snow or

rain or anything like that. With Windy App, I'll use it to figure out exactly when a rainstorm is going to happen. There's some work that I can't do if it's currently raining, and so sometimes I will use that to time it, because I find that the government app, it might just say afternoon rain, but whether that means 1pm or 3PM is... it's not clear.” – Female, 30, New Brunswick, professional

Hazard Simplification

Participants were provided the following information regarding proposed hazard simplification:

The Government of Canada is planning on implementing various changes to alerting information that is available on their website and mobile app. One of these changes is the use of colour-coded weather alerts – yellow, orange and red, which you may have already seen as they were implemented in November 2025.

A hazard is a kind of weather element – wind, rain, snow, etc.

The Government of Canada currently issues alerts for around 28 types of hazards.

They are proposing to move to a list of fewer than 20 alert types that focus more on what the weather will *do* rather than what the weather *is*. Under this approach, similar hazards would be nested under a broader category based on the impact they have.

Although most would remain the same, the main simplified alerts would be consolidated and based on their similar impact:

ICE: would include freezing rain, freezing drizzle, flash freeze

WIND: would replace specifying Les Suetes, Wreckhouse, Chinook/downslope winds

VISIBILITY: would include fog, dust, snow, blowing snow, blizzard (at the moderate/high-extreme impact)

The following lists were shown to participants to illustrate how the list of alerts would be consolidated as well as a visual of how the weather alerts would look under the proposed list compared to the current approach:

Current Hazard List:

Air Quality Warning	Heat Warning	Tornado Warning
Arctic Outflow Warning	Hurricane Warning	Tornado Watch
Blizzard Warning	Hurricane Watch	Tropical Cyclone Information Statement
Blowing Snow Advisory	Les Suêtes Wind Warning	Tropical Storm Warning
Coastal Flooding Warning	Rainfall Warning	Tropical Storm Watch
Dust Storm Warning	Severe Thunderstorm Warning	Weather advisory
Extreme Cold Warning	Severe Thunderstorm Watch	Wind warning
Flash Freeze Warning	Smog Warning	Winter Storm Warning
Fog Advisory	Snow Squall Warning	Winter Storm Watch
Freezing Drizzle Advisory	Snow Squall Watch	Wreckhouse Wind Warning
Freezing Rain Warning	Snowfall Warning	-
Frost Advisory	Special Air Quality Statement	-

Proposed hazard list:

<colour> warning – air quality	<colour> warning – rain	<colour> warning – ice (would absorb freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and flash freeze warnings but describe them in a subtitle or bracket)
<colour> warning – coastal flooding	<colour> warning – snow	<colour> watch / warning – tornado
<colour> warning – cold (would absorb extreme cold, windchill, and arctic outflow warnings)	<colour> watch / warning – snow squall	<colour> watch / warning – tropical storm
<colour> warning – heat	<colour> warning – storm (would be a combination of at least 2 hazards like wind and rain, and described in a subtitle or bracket)	<colour> warning – visibility (changing from advisories, would describe in the subtitle or bracket that it's for blizzard, blowing snow, fog or dust)
<colour> warning – frost	<colour> watch / warning – thunderstorm	<colour> warning – wind (would absorb existing Les Suetes, Wreckhouse, and Chinook wind warnings)

<colour> watch / warning – hurricane		
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Current approach



New approach



Impressions of proposed hazard simplification

Overall, most participants expressed either a positive reaction or indifference toward the proposed hazard simplification.

Many participants responded favourably to the consolidated categories and the increased focus on impacts within the alerts, noting that this approach would help people better understand what actions they may need to take to stay prepared.

“I guess your attention is brought first to the fact that visibility and your kind of driving needs are what's impacted because of X, Y, or Z.” – Female, 49, Ontario, general population

Several felt that the original list of alert types was somewhat overwhelming and that streamlining the categories made sense. The sentiment among this group was often summarized as “the simpler, the better.”

It was said that clearly identifying the impacts of a weather event could be especially helpful for newer Canadians who may be less familiar with Canadian weather patterns, as well as for individuals travelling to or visiting provinces and regions that experience different types of weather than they are familiar with.

“The current approach [of] just ‘blizzard’, some people, like newer Canadians, may not know what a blizzard is. But the second one, ‘visibility’, maybe they understand the word better. It’s like, oh, there’s something that I may not see so clear. I guess to get a message across, we want it to be in the simplest language possible, so most people can understand, and can pick it up right away, rather than trying to figure out, oh, what is this blizzard, what is this snow squall, what’s a squall?” – Male, 47, Alberta, general population

“If it’s your first [blizzard] experience, then you have no idea what the impacts are going to be, whereas if you’ve lived here for 15 or so years you know exactly what that’s going to do. So, I guess for people who are new to the country, or just maybe a tourist who happens to be here in, say, October, and experiences their first blizzard, has no idea what’s going on.” – Male, 35, Alberta, professional

At the same time, many participants were somewhat indifferent toward the proposed consolidated alert types. These individuals generally explained that they found the current and proposed examples to be more or less the same and in both alerts the information was clear and easy to understand. In the blizzard alert example specifically, several participants indicated that the key word “blizzard” was the most important and informative element of the alert. They noted that reduced visibility is an obvious or assumed impact of a blizzard; however, they acknowledged that explicitly stating this impact could still be helpful for some audiences. Overall, for this group, the proposed change did not meaningfully improve or detract from their understanding.

“I don’t really have a preference. I mean, either way, we still get the message just the same, so as long as we’re getting the message, that’s really all that matters. I don’t really care how it’s delivered.” – Female, 31, Saskatchewan, general population

A few participants expressed a preference for the original approach, perceiving it to be simpler overall. These participants felt that the impacts associated with certain weather events, such as poor visibility during a blizzard, were obvious or implied so listing it felt unnecessary or redundant.

“For me, the simpler you can get, the better. Obviously, if there’s a blizzard, you’ll have visibility issues. So, it seems a little over the top to include it, and what it does, it makes it busier.” – Male, 68, Saskatchewan, professional

Additionally, a few raised questions about how the new approach would address situations in which a single weather event results in multiple impacts. For example, a blizzard may also involve significant snowfall and strong winds, each of which could warrant its own impact-based alert. There were concerns that if one weather event were to trigger multiple alerts for different impacts, the system might ultimately become less streamlined and potentially more confusing than the hazard alerting approach currently being used.

“Most of these events have multiple [impacts]. So, you're gonna end up with, like, 6 warnings telling you about all the different [impacts], rather than just one saying there's bad weather and then you can read the details if you feel like you need to.” – Male, 45, Ontario, professional

While the alert was said to be enough to understand the overall impact and weather event, many said they would click to read more details. For example, many would look for details about when the weather event is expected to start and end. Others would be interested in additional details depending on the type of weather such as amount of precipitation, windchill, wind speeds, precise location affected, etc.

For the most part, participants felt the consolidated list made sense and did not readily identify any other consolidations that could be made to the list of alerts. However, a few wondered if categories may be missing or could include more details, including:

- The impact of power line damage and/or power outages associated with ice alerts
- Whether more details would be provided for air quality alerts such as the cause
- If hail was missing, or whether this is included in the ice category along with freezing rain
- A few were unclear of the differences between storms, tropical storms and thunderstorms and wondered if they could be consolidated
- A few across the groups noted the absence of an alert for river flooding, unaware that this situation falls under provincial jurisdiction

When asked what would come to mind if they received a warning for ice, most thought of icy conditions, slippery roads and sidewalks and the impacts this may have on walking and driving as well as ice accumulation on buildings. These participants explained that they would assume to take precautions such as leaving extra time if driving somewhere and dressing appropriately for potentially slippery roads and associated cold weather. A few also thought about potential damage to trees or power lines and the potential for power outages.

“My immediate thought would be, like, black ice on the road.” – Male, 53, British Columbia, general population

Only a few participants across the groups said that “ice” was too broad.

However, when explicitly asked if the warning should instead refer to icy surfaces, participants were split. Several who had previously suggested that “ice” was a sufficient alert name felt that perhaps more detail would be better while others were indifferent. Some also suggested “slippery surfaces” or “ice accumulation”. Regardless of the category name, a few felt these alerts should include details about how much freezing rain to expect and whether there were risks of property damage or power outages so that people could prepare as needed.

Simplifying alert types

Participants were then given a brief overview of the existing alert types ranging from non-urgent weather information that might also be a heads up (special weather statement), to a “watch” meaning conditions are favourable for severe weather to develop, to a “warning” (some cast as “advisories”) which means the hazard or severe weather is imminent with high certainty, or occurring right now.

- A. **Special Weather Statement** –used when a weather hazard is not yet at a watch or warning level, or for other information related to a weather event
- B. **Watch** - where conditions are favourable for the development of weather or an environmental hazard, but the occurrence, location, and/or timing of the expected hazardous condition(s) is still too uncertain to issue a warning. It is intended to heighten public awareness of the potential impact of the event and serves as a lead-up to a warning.
- C. **Advisory** - where a certain weather or environmental hazard (for example air quality, frost and tsunami) is either occurring, imminent or is expected to occur.
- D. **Warning** - where a hazardous weather or environmental event that poses a significant threat to public safety and property is certain or imminent.

Most participants were familiar with each of the alert types. Many recalled receiving each type of alert at some point in the past, while a few had experienced only certain types, typically the more severe ones. Some recognized the alert types from seeing them displayed beneath the general weather information in their weather app but did not necessarily recall receiving push notifications for them. There were also a few participants who remembered receiving alerts for specific weather events, such as a yellow-coloured snowfall alert, but could not recall which category the alert fell under.

When asked whether they would like to receive notifications for each of the alert types in the future, reactions were somewhat mixed. Some participants, particularly those who preferred to stay well informed, indicated that they would like to receive notifications for all alert types. These participants continued to express the view that “the more information or heads up, the better”, even if the weather does not ultimately occur. They explained that receiving all alerts would allow them to plan ahead, monitor how the forecast evolves, and ensure they are as prepared as possible.

“It's nice to know that, okay, this may happen, okay, I might not want to drive long distance this day in case this happens, so I like getting all of the warnings and things.” – Female, 55,
Nova Scotia, professional

Others, however, felt that notifications could be limited to more severe instances. For example, several participants suggested that advisories and warnings justified an alert, while special

weather statements and watches may not be urgent enough to warrant a pushed alert. A few expressed frustration that they were receiving what they felt were excessive alerts, particularly those warning only of the possibility of severe weather. This was sometimes viewed as unnecessary distractions that sometimes led to unwarranted concern, especially when the weather does not end up occurring.

Some noted that these less urgent alerts could perhaps be made optional for those who wish to receive them. This perspective was expressed most strongly in relation to special weather statements, which many participants did not consider particularly important.

“I just feel sometimes when I see a special weather statement, I get a little bit of a panic attack. It's like, oh no, what's going to happen? It turns out nothing is gonna happen. I feel like a watch and a warning is more than sufficient for probably most people, to be aware of any special weather things that occur.” – Male, 36, Alberta, general population

“The advisory and the warning give me information that I can prepare for. The other two [are] nice to know, but I don't do anything. It doesn't really affect me until we get to the advisory or warning.” – Male, 45, Newfoundland, professional

Some felt that whether an alert was necessary was dependent on the type of hazard. For instance, in the case of a potential tornado or ice storm, some felt that alerts should be issued as early as the special weather statement stage. In contrast, for hazards such as rain or snow, several participants indicated that notifications could wait until the situation becomes an advisory or warning.

Use of frost information

When asked specifically about frost advisories, many participants indicated that they do pay attention to this type of alert. However, it should be noted that a few participants initially confused a frost advisory with frostbite warning, which they later admitted was of more importance to them than frost.

In discussing how frost-related information helps them plan or make decisions, participants most commonly referenced their gardens at home. Several explained that they rely on frost advisories to know when to bring plants indoors or take protective measures to prevent damage.

Beyond gardening and agriculture, other participants described more routine planning considerations. Some noted that frost advisories prompt them to allow extra time in the morning to warm up their vehicle and scrape the windshield. A few participants in the professional groups also explained that frost conditions can affect their work schedules, sometimes requiring them to delay certain tasks slightly until temperatures rise or to avoid leaving certain equipment outdoors if it must remain dry. Other professionals pointed out that while frost advisories may help people

with plants they can move or protect, for their operations there was little they could do to protect their crops. As a result, for these professionals, the frost advisory was not terribly relevant.

Feedback was mixed when participants were asked whether frost advisories should trigger an alert or simply be included in the general forecast. For many, having frost information incorporated into the regular forecast was sufficient, as they explained that they are typically already paying attention to the possibility of frost during the months when it is most common.

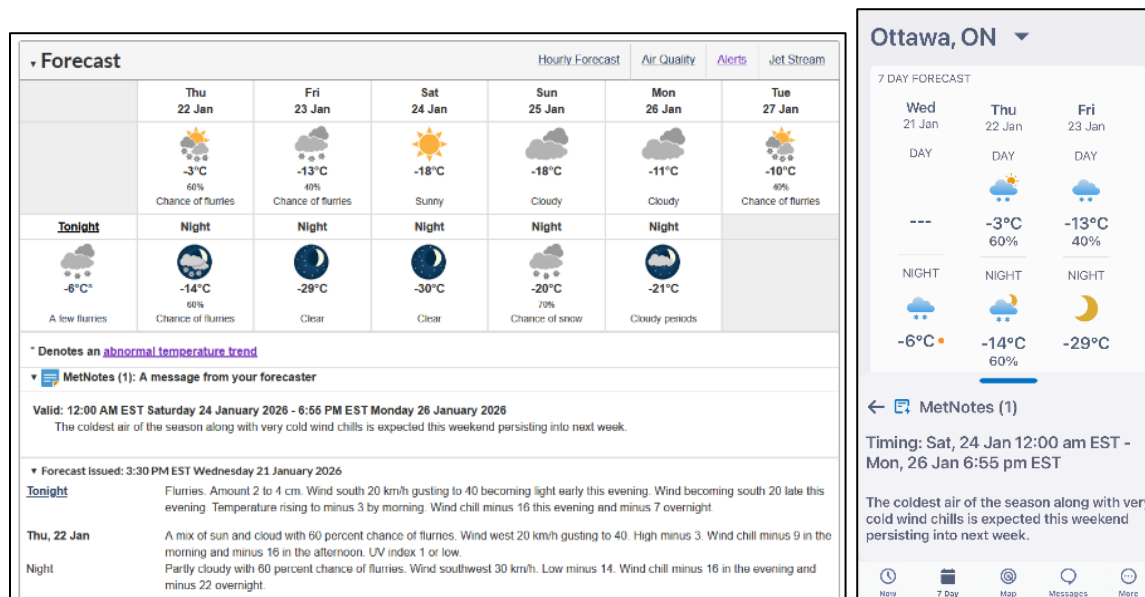
“Around that time of the year, I'm checking temperature anyways. Normally under [the temperature] it will say frost expected or possible tonight and that for me is fine, because I feel like frost isn't crazy dangerous relative to, like, ice, or snowstorm, or these other kinds of hazards.” – Female, 24, Ontario, general population

Others, however, indicated that they would prefer receiving an alert when frost is expected as an added heads up. When asked how they would feel about instead setting their weather app to notify them when temperatures are expected to drop below freezing (0° Celsius), most participants felt that this option would be sufficient. A few also indicated interest in setting optional notifications for conditions such as extreme cold or windchill.

A few participants suggested that a dedicated frost alert might be more appropriate in situations where frost is forecasted outside of the typical colder months. For example, an unexpected early fall or late spring frost could catch people off guard if they are not closely monitoring the forecast.

MetNotes

Next, participants were asked about a feature on the ECCC website and app called MetNotes, which provides additional forecaster notes.



A minority of participants indicated that they had noticed MetNotes in the past. However, overall reactions to this feature were quite favourable. Many participants noted that this additional context and information provided would be useful and appreciated. Responses were especially enthusiastic among those who, throughout the discussions, had consistently expressed a preference for receiving as much information and detail as possible. Participants explained that the added context would be particularly beneficial when planning travel or long drives, or when trying to better understand specific elements of the forecast, such as wind conditions or the expected start and end times of certain weather events. A few also commented that the notes added personality to the forecast and appreciated the element of a real meteorologist's voice.

"As much detail as possible is exactly what I want, and I like that they have the timing on there with the dates as well. Of course, I would like a little more information, just because I do like as much detail as possible when it comes to the weather. But I do like this, and I would like to have this as an alert." – Female, 37, Ontario, professional

It was also suggested that the additional information and context would be especially valuable for individuals who are less familiar with regional weather patterns, such as newcomers, international students, or those travelling to different parts of the country.

"I've just returned to school, and there's a lot of very new international students, who, from me talking to, a lot of them don't really fully understand what cold weather can do to them,

and what is actually cold weather. So, I feel like having that note saying, this is the coldest air we are going to be getting this season provides a bit more context.” – Male, 22, Ontario, general population

Many participants agreed that these MetNotes should be included in alerts when available, allowing users to easily review additional context when certain weather conditions are forecasted. While a few mentioned that they would typically look up more information when poor conditions or specific weather events are predicted, having all relevant details in one place would be convenient and efficient.

At the same time, some participants were indifferent and indicated that they would not oppose the inclusion of this information but would likely ignore it if they saw long paragraphs of text. A few also wondered about the geographical relevance, particularly those living in rural areas or smaller towns, where forecasts are often based on broader regional data points and may not always accurately reflect conditions at their precise location. A small number of participants felt that the MetNotes should only appear once a user clicks on an alert or opens the app or website for more details, as including them upfront could make the interface appear busier and make it more difficult to quickly access basic information.

“I didn't even know the MetNotes existed. I have never looked at them, and if I got an alert on my phone with, like, a paragraph to read, I wouldn't read it. – Female, 31, Saskatchewan, general population

“When I go into my weather app, there's really three things I care about. What's the temperature gonna be and the precipitation and amounts. So it's not that it's not useful, I'm more indifferent. But if it would impede my ability to get the information I want, I'd get annoyed.” – Male, 30, New Brunswick, general population

WRAP (Weather Risk Awareness Process)

How weather information is used for planning

When it comes to how people seek out weather information to inform their plans, responses generally fell into two categories. Most participants said they check the weather either the day of their plans or one to two days in advance. This tends to support day-to-day decision making and, for professionals, can influence work-related decisions that require roughly 12 to 24 hours' notice.

By contrast, others may check the forecast a week or even two weeks ahead, especially travelling or planning outdoor events. However, these individuals know that forecasts are likely to evolve and will continue monitoring as the date approaches.

If poor weather is forecasted, most would make decisions around 24 hours in advance of their planned activity or event on whether to proceed or not. Many said they do not often let weather cancel their plans but will instead ensure they are well prepared. This was often said to depend on the activity or event in question as well as the severity of the weather. A few said that unless conditions are expected to be extreme (e.g., hailstorm or tornado) they are more likely to go through with plans even in poor weather if they have pre-paid for something such as a concert or hotel reservations.

Professionals also consider the type of hazard when making work-related decisions. Several explained that they need to balance employee safety with the risk of acting too early. Cancelling a job too far in advance can create unnecessary disruption if the forecast ultimately becomes less severe, but at the same time, they must make decisions with enough notice to ensure workers are adequately prepared and protected.

“We try and see if the weather changes, or the weather is good enough... We work on the roof. [If] we know it's going to be -30° on the ground, we're not going to have anyone work... That's unsafe. If the weather looks like it is -30° the next day, within 24 hours, we stop the job. I would get into trouble if, let's say I cancel the job 7 days in advance and then on that day it is actually good weather. Then I look kind of foolish. So, 24 hours for me, in my line of work.” – Male, 35, Alberta, professional

When it comes to the level of detail participants would look for in order to make decisions about whether to cancel an event or planned outing, most tended to agree that the more information, the better. When asked whether they want more details such as location, probability, or amounts, there was widespread consensus that it would likely be beneficial. Participants said that detailed forecast information becomes more useful as the date gets closer. When looking further ahead, they expect the forecast to change at least somewhat, so they are less likely to focus closely on the finer details.

A few brought up wind direction as a consideration for outdoor plans. The savvier consumers of weather information knew of implications to consider as a result of wind direction and would appreciate seeing that included in weather information more often.

When there is an early indication of some severe weather, nearly all suggested that they would be following developments and checking to see how that is developing over subsequent days.

Weather “Outlook”

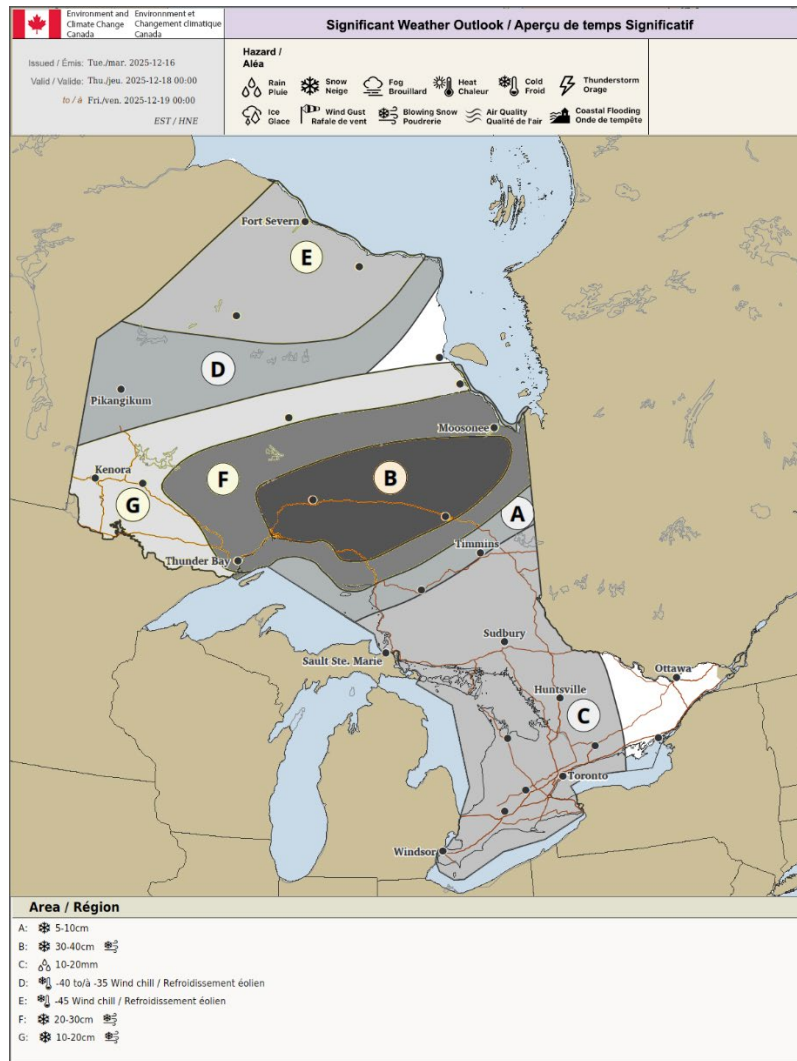
The focus groups included an introduction to and discussion about a significant weather outlook. This would be a feature to inform people about severe weather in the forecast. To stimulate this part of the discussion, the following information and example image were provided:

An Outlook shows expected weather hazard information for certain geographic areas of Canada. They can be issued daily for a 24-hour period about a day to two days ahead of potential severe weather. Outlooks would not be updated with active severe weather alert information; users are asked to check the forecast or for the latest alerts for the most up-to-date information.

As you can see, shaded and outlined areas on the map are referenced with a weather hazard icon below which then has numerical values associated with it, like so many mm of rain, the anticipated temperature range, or how strong the wind in km/h might be.

They are meant to provide a heads-up on potentially severe weather a bit more into the future than a standard next 24-hour forecast would. They are not colour-coded as they are not intended to forecast impacts, just the potential for severe weather.

The following monochrome image was shown as an example of what the Outlook could look like:



Feedback on the Outlook ranged from mildly positive to negative. At a fundamental level, the concept of a static image that quickly becomes dated does not align with modern expectations. Participants are accustomed to dynamic, frequently updated weather information (such as a weather radar map). In addition, few expressed interest in weather information covering large geographic areas, such as an entire province like Ontario. Most are primarily concerned with local conditions and patterns. While the idea was appealing to some, these factors limited the perceived value of the tool in its current form.

"I like it, but I just wish it was able to change in more of a radar way. Even if it was just every hour just so that you can see the updates. Because if this was put out on the 16th, and it's going from the 18th to the 19th, then a lot of things are gonna change, probably, in that little area." – Female, 37, Ontario, professional

"To me, it just seems unnecessary. I don't know, the more I think about it, the information that I can get from this, I can get directly from the app itself, or from the weather page

itself. I don't need to be wondering what shade of gray I am today.” – Female, 41, Nunavut, general population

That said, a minority felt the Outlook could be helpful, particularly during seasons associated with more severe weather. Some noted they would be unlikely to use it for routine weather information in their own location but might consult it when travelling to be aware of potential weather within the broader region they are travelling within.

“I would appreciate looking at something like that. That would help, especially if planning traveling and stuff.” – Female, 58, Ontario, general population

Many found the visuals of the Outlook busy and not immediately intuitive. Several commented that it is not something that can be quickly glanced at for key information, as it requires referring to both a legend for the hazard list as well as for the regional conditions. On a related note, it was also suggested that both of these legends should be side by side to make referencing them more efficient.

Similarly, the monochrome colour scheme was frequently described as vague and did not clearly convey differences in severity. While some assumed darker grey indicated more severe weather, this was not immediately clear. Participants would have expected to see more contrasting colours such as red to signal danger or warnings, or temperature themed colours such as blue for cold, or red for heat.

Discussion of the legend and hazard icons was generally positive, though there were some points of confusion. The coastal flooding icon was often cited as unclear, with at least one participant noting that it resembled fog. Similar comments were made regarding the fog icon being unclear. Otherwise, the legend icons were considered straightforward.

The overall number of icons was not raised as a concern without prompting. However, when asked about reducing the legend to include only hazards relevant to the season or specific Outlook, many felt this would be an improvement.

The most common constructive criticism was that the Outlook would be more effective if it were animated, dynamic, and interactive, similar to radar or satellite imagery. As presented, most participants indicated they would be unlikely to make regular use of it.

Finally, when asked whether the Outlook would serve as an adequate heads-up for severe weather, most felt that a formal watch would remain more effective.

Preferred name

Participants were asked to select their preferred name for this outlook concept from the following list:

- A. Significant Weather Outlook / Aperçu météo
- B. Severe Weather Outlook / Aperçu de temps significatif
- C. Hazard Risk Outlook / Aperçu des risques météo
- D. Storm Potential Outlook / Aperçu des risques de tempête
- E. Early Weather Insight / Coup d'œil météo

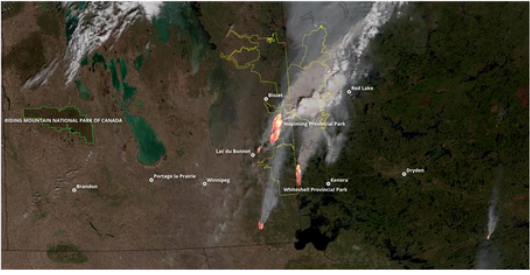
Participants did not share strong opinions about any of the names. Overall, the most popular choice was “Early Weather Insight” as it seemed the most literal description and would be easily understood for what it offers. Uniquely, French participants nearly unanimously preferred the name “Hazard Risk Outlook” (specifically, tested in French as “Aperçu des risques météo”).

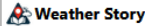
Text-Based Weather Information

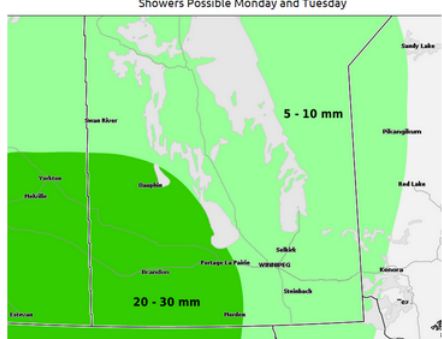
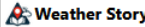
Participants were shown a concept where a section of the app and website would use direct output from numerical weather prediction systems to generate the forecast for any point in Canada and feature brief text and a graphic to describe extra context about the weather, upcoming potential severe weather, and educational or safety information related to that location.

This concept would feature up to three tabs or banners depending on the story or weather event being featured.

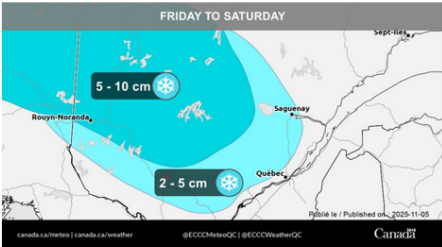
The examples presented are below:

Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
 A satellite image of wildfire smoke in southeastern Manitoba and western Ontario on May 13, 2025 at 2PM. The white-coloured patches on the top left are clouds.	The satellite image on the left shows the smoke plumes in southeastern Manitoba moving to the northeast and into northwestern Ontario. • Southwesterly winds will continue to disperse smoke to the northeast from today to Thursday, keeping Winnipeg and west of it nice and clear. • Hot and dry conditions will continue until this weekend. Wildfires may spread and grow due to these conditions with moderate southwest winds.	
		Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM

Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
 Health symptoms to look for during a wildfire event.	Follow Official Instructions Leave immediately if evacuation orders are issued. Don't wait until the last minute. Drive Safely if Evacuating Keep headlights on, drive slowly, and be prepared for poor visibility due to smoke. Limit Smoke Exposure Stay indoors with windows and doors closed. Use an air purifier if possible. Avoid strenuous outdoor activities.	
		Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM

Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
 Total rainfall amounts for Monday and Tuesday.		Some showers are possible in southeastern Manitoba as an upper trough pattern arrives. Rainfall amounts and the duration of the rain probably won't be enough to put out all the fires. • A lot of uncertainty about how much relief there will be. It also depends on how much wildfires grow prior to early next week. • New fires may also start with lightning strikes if thunderstorms develop early next week. • Prepare for smoky conditions to return midweek after the showers clear up.
		Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM

Coming Up on Friday and Saturday: First Significant Snowfall of the Season



FRIDAY TO SATURDAY

5 - 10 cm

2 - 5 cm

Total Snowfall Accumulations Expected from Friday to Saturday.

Time to get your snow brushes out!

- Abitibi to Saguenay: 5 to 10 cm
- Outaouais and closer to the St. Lawrence River: 2 to 5 cm
- Possible rain mixed with snow near the St. Lawrence River

A few tips as you head out into the winter wonderland:

- **Take Your Time**, particularly during the Friday evening commute. The ground may get slushy, slippery, and messy, so give yourself extra travel time and drive carefully.
- The **first snow** is always a surprise! Prepare to shovel, salt, or sand the surfaces.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 11:53:00 AM

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Coming Up on Friday and Saturday: First Significant Snowfall of the Season



Drive safely in winter weather

- Check the weather and road conditions BEFORE heading out
- Top-up windshield fluid and gas tank
- Use winter tires
- Get an emergency car kit
- SLOW DOWN!

Be #WeatherWise

Canada

More safety tips for winter weather.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 11:53:00 AM

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Storm Conditions Relaxing Today

Location	Maximum wind gust (km/h)
Race Rock	119
Hope Airport	113
Point Atkinson Lighthouse	102
Victoria Gonzales	100
Trial Island Lighthouse	85
Vancouver International Airport	76

Observations of the strongest wind gust over the B.C. south coast on December 17, 2025.

The strongest winds are behind us now and winds will continue to ease this morning.

- The good news is that we are **not** anticipating another windstorm in the next few days.
- Scattered showers are expected for the rest of today (Thursday, December 18).

More pleasant weather is coming up.

- Mainly cloudy on Friday and this weekend.
- Outdoor activities are mostly good to go!
- A few isolated showers are possible.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 2:55:55 PM

In striking contrast to the Outlook tested, reactions to the text-based weather information were largely positive.

Overall, the concept was well received. Participants appreciated the incorporation of the “voice and knowledge of the meteorologists,” with several noting that the human touch and explanation typically provided in television or radio forecasts is something they miss when relying on apps. The casual tone was widely viewed as a strength, making the information feel approachable, easy to understand, and as though it was coming from a real person rather than an automated system.

"I really like it, because I'm sure me and a lot of other people don't have cable anymore, so this is kind of like a replacement for the Weather Channel, where a meteorologist is saying all this." – Female, 29, Nova Scotia, general population

"I think for anybody that watches the weather on TV, like, that's exactly the way a weather person would say it on TV, and I like that. it's friendly, it's casual, it's the kind of way you'd talk in the coffee shop kind of thing. That's what I like about it." – Male, 63, Saskatchewan, general population

Visually, the combination of imagery and written commentary was well regarded, particularly when the imagery added meaningful context, such as satellite visuals. The format of multiple tabs or panels that users could scroll through was also appealing, provided navigation remained efficient and user-friendly. Many felt this structure allows for additional depth and unique insights without cluttering the overall experience. Preferences for how panels should be organized, whether chronologically or by information type, appeared to depend on the specific weather situation.

"I think it's very informative, and it's very well laid out. It's just about as good as it can be."
– Male, 63, Saskatchewan, general population

"I like all the extra information, I like that it's in the three parts, it's kind of like a story, beginning, middle, end type of thing. I like all the graphics as well, they're easy to read, and then the stuff on the right-hand side, all the detail, that's fantastic, because it gives you as much information as, you know, you could need at that point." – Female, 37, Ontario, professional

That said, not all participants felt the product would meet a personal need. A few indicated they would be unlikely to use it regularly, as they do not typically seek this level of detail. Others acknowledged that while it may offer more information than they personally require, they appreciated the ability to sift through and focus only on content relevant to them. For example, some felt health and safety guidance related to forest fires was information they already knew, but recognized that it could be valuable for others, particularly those who had not experienced such weather conditions, including newcomers.

["I think that's a lot of information... for example, there was a lot of smoke outside because there were big forest fires. You know, I think it would be interesting to have access to that information if I wanted to know more, but it's not something I would check on a regular basis."] – Female, 30, Quebec, general population
"Je trouve que c'est beaucoup d'informations... par exemple, Il y avait beaucoup de fumée à l'extérieur parce qu'il y a des gros feux de forêt. T'sais, je trouverais ça intéressant t'sais de pouvoir avoir accès à cette information là si je veux en savoir plus, mais c'est pas quelque chose que j'irais voir sur une base régulière."

Views were mixed on the inclusion of safety advice or educational components. While some saw these as helpful additions, others considered them secondary to core forecast information. Concise examples, such as the wind-focused panel, were preferred by some participants who valued brevity and clarity.

Among those who said they would use this feature, the frequency at which they would do so varied. Some suggested they might check it daily, while others indicated they would be more likely to consult it during periods of severe weather, particularly when a watch or warning is issued.

When discussing potential story topics, participants showed particular interest in content related to extreme cold, rapid temperature changes, and storm paths. Moderator-probed topics also generated engagement, suggesting there is appetite for explanatory content when it relates directly to impactful or unusual weather.

Preferred name

Participants were asked to select their preferred name for this text-based weather information concept from lists provided. The list for the English groups was:

- A. Forecaster Notes
- B. Forecast in Focus
- C. Weather Story
- D. Notes from the Meteorologists
- E. Weather Update
- F. Messages from Meteorologists

The list for the French groups was:

- A. Commentaire des prévisionnistes
- B. Focus météo
- C. Récit météo
- D. Capsule météo
- E. Notes des météorologues
- F. Mise à jour des conditions météorologiques
- G. Manchette météo

Among the English groups, there was no clear winner in the name preference, although the name “Messages from Meteorologists” stood out as the least popular option. Slightly more picked “Notes from the Meteorologists” but the distribution across four names was fairly even and discussions suggested there was little attachment to any of the names.

Among the French groups, as with the naming of the outlook concept, there was much more of a consensus around the name “Capsule météo”.

Methodology

All research work was conducted in accordance with the professional standards established by the Government of Canada Public Opinion Research Standards.

Quorus was responsible for coordinating all aspects of the research project including working with Environment and Climate Change Canada in designing and translating the recruitment screener and the moderation guide, coordinating all aspects of data collection logistics, including participant recruitment, providing the online focus group platform and moderating all focus groups and delivering required reports at the end of data collection. The research approach is outlined in greater detail below.

Target audience and sample frame

This research study consisted of two target audiences:

- GenPop: adults aged 18 and older from the general population who either use the internet or an application to look for weather information
- Professionals: adults aged 18 and older who use weather information for professional (job-related) decision-making

Participants were recruited from the following regions:

- British Columbia
- Prairies (AB/SK/MB)
- Ontario
- Quebec (French)
- Atlantic Canada
- Northern Canada (YK/NWT/NU)

In the design of the recruitment screener, specific questions were inserted to clearly identify whether participants qualified for the research program and to ensure, where applicable, a good representation by age, region, gender, ethnicity and education.

Additionally, in each group, Quorus ensured representation from individuals who lived in a community that has experienced a severe weather warning in the past two years including but not limited to wildfires, flooding, coastal erosion and flooding, hurricanes or damaging winds. Quorus also ensured representation across the groups from individuals who are impacted by weather conditions for daily activities because of a visual or mobility limitation (for example, the use of a wheelchair, cane, walker or other mobility aid).

In addition to the general participant profiling criteria noted above, additional screening measures to ensure quality respondents include the following:

- No participant (nor anyone in their immediate family or household) was recruited who worked in related government departments/agencies, nor in advertising, marketing research, public relations, or the media (radio, television, newspaper, film/video production, etc.).
- No participant acquainted with another participant was knowingly recruited for the same study, unless they were recruited into separately scheduled sessions.
- No participant was recruited who had attended a qualitative research session within the past six months.
- No participant was recruited who had attended five or more qualitative research sessions in the past five years.
- No participant was recruited who had attended a qualitative research session on the same general topic as defined by the Researcher/Moderator in the past two years.

Description of data collection procedures

Data collection consisted of 10 online focus groups, each lasting approximately 90 minutes.

For groups with the general population, Quorus recruited 10 participants with the goal of achieving 8-10 participants per session. For groups with individuals who use weather information for professional decision making, Quorus recruited 8 participants with the goal of achieving 6-8 participants per session. Participants from the general population received an honorarium of \$125 while those in the professional segment received an honorarium of \$150.

Participants invited to participate in the focus groups were recruited by telephone through random digit dialing of the general public as well as through the use of a proprietary opt-in database.

The recruitment of participants followed the screening, recruiting and privacy considerations as set out in the *Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research—Qualitative Research*. Furthermore, recruitment respected the following requirements:

- All recruitment was conducted in the participant's official language of choice, English and French, as appropriate.
- Upon request, participants were informed on how they can access the research findings.
- Upon request, participants were provided Quorus' privacy policy.

- Recruitment confirmed each participant had the ability to speak, understand, read and write in the language in which the session was to be conducted.
- Participants were informed of their rights under the *Privacy and Access to Information Acts* and ensure that those rights were protected throughout the research process. This included: informing participants of the purpose of the research, identifying both the sponsoring department or agency and research supplier, informing participants that the study will be made available to the public in 6 months after field completion through Library and Archives Canada, and informing participants that their participation in the study is voluntary and the information provided will be administered according to the requirements of the *Privacy Act*.

At the recruitment stage and at the beginning of each focus group, participants were informed that the research was being conducted for the Government of Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Participants were informed of the audio/video recording of their session and of the presence of ECCC observers. Quorus ensured that prior consent was obtained at the recruitment stage and before participants began their focus group.

All sessions were conducted in the evening after regular business hours. The research team used the Zoom platform to host and record focus group sessions (through microphones and webcams connected to the moderator and participants electronic devices, such as their laptop or tablet) enabling client remote viewing. Participants were discouraged from using a smartphone to participate given the number and types of visuals the moderator was expected to show.

A total of 10 online focus groups were conducted across Canada between January 26 and February 9, 2026. The details of these groups are outlined in the table below.

Date	Region	Segment	Language	Number of participants
January 26, 2026	Ontario	General population	English	8
	British Columbia	General population	English	9
January 27, 2026	Atlantic Canada	General population	English	10
	Prairies	General population	English	10
January 28, 2026	ON / MB / SK	Professionals	English	8
	BC / AB	Professionals	English	4
January 29, 2026	Atlantic Canada	Professionals	English	8
	Northern Canada (Yukon/Northwest Territories/ Nunavut)	General population	English	5
	Quebec	General population	French	8

Date	Region	Segment	Language	Number of participants
February 9, 2026	Quebec	Professionals	French	8
				Total: 78

Qualitative research disclaimer

Qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively projectable measures. The purpose is not to generate “statistics” but to hear the full range of opinions on a topic, understand the language participants use, gauge degrees of passion and engagement and to leverage the power of the group to inspire ideas. Participants are encouraged to voice their opinions, irrespective of whether or not that view is shared by others.

Due to the sample size, the special recruitment methods used, and the study objectives themselves, it is clearly understood that the work under discussion is exploratory in nature. The findings are not, nor were they intended to be, projectable to a larger population.

Specifically, it is inappropriate to suggest or to infer that few (or many) real world users would behave in one way simply because few (or many) participants behaved in this way during the sessions. This kind of projection is strictly the prerogative of quantitative research.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Screener

Specifications

- 10 online focus groups
 - 6 groups to be conducted with adults from the General Population (GenPop) who either use the internet or an application to look for weather information
 - 4 groups to be conducted with adults who use weather information for professional (job-related) decision-making (e.g. highway managers or roadworkers, municipal emergency management, concrete pourers, school bus transportation supervisors, sports advisors, farmers, event planners, parks employees, etc.)
- For GenPop groups, recruit 10 participants per group, for 8 to 10 to show
- For “professional” groups, recruit 8 participants per group, for 6-8 to show
- GenPop participants to be paid \$125 while “professional” participants are to be paid \$150
- Efforts will be made to recruit a mix across age, gender, education, and cultural backgrounds for GenPop groups and on a best effort basis for “professional” groups
- For GenPop groups specifically:
 - In each group recruit a minimum of 2 Indigenous respondents
 - In each group aim to recruit 1 participant who has experienced a severe weather warning
 - In each group recruit 1 participant with a disability who is affected by weather for daily activities

All times are stated in local area time unless specified otherwise.

Group 1 Ontario January 26 5:00 pm EST GenPop	Group 2 British Columbia January 26 5:00 pm PST GenPop	Group 3 Atlantic Canada January 27 5:00 pm AST GenPop	Group 4 Prairies January 27 6:00 pm CST / 5:00 pm MST GenPop
Group 5 ON / MB / SK January 28 6:00 pm CST / 5:00 pm MST Professionals	Group 6 BC / AB January 28 6:00 pm PST Professionals	Group 7 Atlantic Canada January 29 5:00 pm AST Professionals	Group 8 North of 60 (YK/NWT/NU) January 29 7:00 pm EST GenPop
Group 9 Quebec February 9 5:00 pm EST GenPop	Group 10 Quebec February 9 7:00 pm EST Professionals		

Questionnaire

A. Introduction

Hello/Bonjour, my name is [NAME] and I am with Quorus Consulting Group, a national public opinion research company. We're planning a series of discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada with people in your area. Would you prefer to continue in English or French? / Préférez-vous continuer en anglais ou en français?

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: FOR ENGLISH GROUPS, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN FRENCH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, "Malheureusement, nous recherchons des gens qui parlent anglais pour participer à ces groupes de discussion. Nous vous remercions de votre intérêt." FOR FRENCH GROUPS, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN ENGLISH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, "Unfortunately, we are looking for people who speak French to participate in this discussion group. We thank you for your interest."]

[INTERVIEWER NOTE 2: IF SOMEONE IS ASKING TO PARTICIPATE IN FRENCH/ENGLISH BUT NO GROUP IN THIS LANGUAGE IS AVAILABLE IN THIS AREA, TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR. EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO INCLUDE THEM IN A GROUP IN THEIR PREFERRED LANGUAGE IN THE NEAREST TIME ZONE TO WHERE THEY LIVE. ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS CAN ALSO BE ACCOMMODATED AS THE NEED ARISES.]

As I was saying – we are planning a series of discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada with people in your area. The purpose of the research is to obtain feedback on some changes being considered for weather-related information available on Government of Canada websites and mobile apps. The groups will last up to 90 minutes (one and a half hours) and people who take part will receive a cash gift to thank them for their time.

Participation is completely voluntary. We are interested in your opinions. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a group discussion led by a research professional and will include about seven to nine other participants invited the same way I am inviting you. All opinions will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED ABOUT PRIVACY LAWS, SAY: "The information collected through the research is subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act*, legislation of the Government of Canada, and to the provisions of relevant provincial privacy legislation."]

1. Before we invite anyone to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix of people in each of the groups. This will take 5 minutes. May I continue?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK/DISCONTINUE

B. Qualification

2. Do you or does anyone in your immediate family or household work in any of the following areas? **[READ LIST]**

	Yes	No
a) A marketing research firm	1	2
b) A magazine or newspaper, online or print	1	2
c) A radio or television station	1	2
d) A public relations company	1	2
e) An online media company or as a blog writer	1	2
f) The provincial or federal government	1	2
g) The municipal or regional government	1	2

IF “YES” TO ANY OF (A) THROUGH (F), THANK/DISCONTINUE

3. Does the work you do involve making key decisions based on weather conditions? This would require you to often if not always monitor weather conditions as part of your job. **PROVIDE EXAMPLES AS NEEDED**

Yes

No

Not employed

Unsure

4. **[ASK IF Q3 = YES]** Please specify your job/occupation. _____

IF JOB INVOLVES DECISION-MAKING RELATED TO WEATHER, CONSIDER FOR “PROFESSIONAL” GROUPS, SKIP TO Q7

(E.G. HIGHWAY MANAGERS OR ROADWORKERS, MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, CONCRETE POURERS, SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISORS, SPORTS ADVISORS, FARMERS, EVENT PLANNERS, PARKS EMPLOYEES, ETC.)

IF Q2G=YES BUT DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR THE “PROFESSIONAL” GROUPS, THANK AND TERMINATE

5. Where do you typically look for local weather information? **[READ LIST - SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]**

- | | |
|---|---|
| The internet or a website | 1 |
| A mobile application on your smartphone or a tablet | 2 |
| Television | 3 |
| Radio | 4 |
| Newspaper | 5 |
| Other, please specify _____ | 6 |
| None of the above | 7 |

IF CODES 1 AND/OR 2 ARE SELECTED, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK AND TERMINATE

6. In the last 2 years, have you lived in a community that has experienced a severe weather warning including but not limited to warnings of wildfires, coastal erosion or flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.?

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Yes, specify _____ | 1 |
| No | 2 |

AIM FOR AT LEAST 1 PARTICIPANT IN EACH GENPOP SESSION WHO HAS EXPERIENCED A SEVERE WEATHER WARNING

7. Can weather conditions sometimes limit your daily activities because of a visual or mobility limitation you may have? **[IF NEEDED:** For example, the use of a wheelchair, cane, walker or other mobility aid].

Yes

No

AIM TO RECRUIT 1 PARTICIPANT IN EACH GENPOP SESSION WHO IS AFFECTED BY WEATHER FOR DAILY ACTIVITIES

8. In which province or territory do you live in?

British Columbia	1
Alberta	2
Saskatchewan	3
Manitoba	4
Ontario	5
Quebec	6
New Brunswick	7
Nova Scotia	8
Prince Edward Island	9
Newfoundland and Labrador	10
Yukon	11
Nunavut	12
Northwest Territories	13
Prefer not to say	99 [THANK & TERMINATE.]

9. **[SKIP TO Q10 IF YUKON, NWT OR NUNAVUT]** Do you currently live in... **[READ LIST]**

A city or metropolitan area with a population of at least 100,000	1
A city with a population of 30,000 to 100,000	2
A city or town with a population of 10,000 to 30,000	3
A town or rural area with a population under 10,000	4

AIM FOR A MIX OF PARTICIPANTS FROM URBAN AREAS AND SMALLER COMMUNITIES

10. We are looking to include people of various ages in the group discussion. May I have your age please? **RECORD AGE:** _____

RECRUIT A MIX OF AGES AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD

11. What is your gender identity? [If you do not feel comfortable disclosing, you do not need to do so] **[DO NOT READ LIST]**

- | | |
|--|---|
| Male | 1 |
| Female | 2 |
| Other/Prefer to self-describe, please specify: _____ | 3 |
| Prefer not to say | 4 |

AIM FOR 50/50 SPLIT OF MALE AND FEMALE, WHILE RECRUITING OTHER GENDER IDENTITIES AS THEY FALL

12. We want to make sure we speak to a diversity of people. Do you identify as any of the following? **[SELECT ONE]**

- | | |
|--|---|
| An Indigenous person from Canada, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)? First Nations includes Status and Non–Status Indians. | 1 |
| A member of an ethnocultural or a visible minority group other than an Indigenous person | 2 |
| None of the above | 3 |

IN EACH GENPOP GROUP, AIM TO RECRUIT AT LEAST 2 MEMBERS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND A MIX OF ETHNICITIES

13. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? **[READ LIST]**

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Some high school | 1 |
| Completed high school | 2 |
| Some college | 3 |
| Graduated from college | 4 |
| Some university | 5 |
| Graduated from university | 6 |
| Post-graduate degree | 7 |
| Prefer not to say | 9 |

RECRUIT A MIX

14. Have you ever attended a discussion group or taken part in an interview on any topic that was arranged in advance and for which you received money for participating?

Yes 1

No 2 **GO TO Q18**

15. When did you last attend one of these discussion groups or interviews?

Within the last 6 months 1 **THANK & TERMINATE**

Over 6 months ago 2

16. Thinking about the groups or interviews that you have taken part in, what were the main topics discussed?

RECORD: _____

THANK/TERMINATE IF RELATED TO WEATHER / WEATHER ALERTING

17. How many discussion groups or interviews have you attended in the past 5 years?

Fewer than 5 1

Five or more 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

18. Participants in group discussions are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts, how comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in an online group discussion with others your age? Are you...

READ OPTIONS

Very comfortable 1 **MIN 5 PER GROUP**

Fairly comfortable 2

Not very comfortable 3 **THANK & TERMINATE**

Very uncomfortable 4 **THANK & TERMINATE**

C. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

19. I would like to invite you to participate in an online focus group session where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated discussion with other residents from your region. The discussion will be led by a researcher from the national public opinion research firm, Quorus Consulting. The session will be recorded but your participation will be confidential. The group will be hosted using an online web conferencing platform, taking place on [DAY OF WEEK], [DATE], at [TIME]. It will last up to 90 minutes (one and a half hours). People who attend will receive [\$125/150] to thank them for their time.

Would you be interested in taking part in this study?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

20. Do you have access to a stable internet connection, capable of sustaining a 90-minute online video conference?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

21. Participants will be asked to provide their answers through an online web conferencing platform using a computer or a tablet (not a smartphone) in a quiet room. Is there any reason why you could not participate? (No access to computer or tablet, internet, etc.) If you need glasses to read or a device for hearing, please remember to wear them.

Yes 1

No 2 **SKIP TO Q24**

22. Is there anything we could do to ensure that you can participate?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

DK/NR 9 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

23. What specifically? [OPEN END]

INTERVIEWER TO NOTE FOR POTENTIAL ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW

RECRUITER NOTE: WHEN TERMINATING AN INTERVIEW, SAY: *“Thank you very much for your cooperation. We are unable to invite you to participate because we have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours.”*

24. The discussion group will be video-recorded. These recordings are used to help with analyzing the findings and writing the report. The results from the discussions will be grouped together in the research report, which means that individuals will not be identified in anyway. Neither your name nor your specific comments will appear in the research report. Is this acceptable?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

25. There will be some people from Environment and Climate Change Canada observing the session. They will not take part in the discussion and they will not know your full name. Is this acceptable?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

26. Thank you. Just to make sure, the group will take place on **[DAY OF WEEK]**, **[DATE]**, at **[TIME]** and it will last up to 90 minutes (one and a half hours). Following your participation, you will receive [\$125/\$150] to thank you for your time. Are you interested and available to attend?

Yes 1

No 2 **THANK & TERMINATE**

To conduct the session, we will be using a screen-sharing application called **Zoom**. **We will need to send you by email the instructions to connect.**

We recommend that you click on the link we will send you a few days prior to your session to make sure you can access the online meeting that has been setup and repeat these steps at least 10 to 15 minutes prior to your session.

As we are only inviting a small number of people to attend, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, **you cannot send someone to participate on your behalf** - please call us so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at **[INSERT NUMBER]** at our office. Please ask for **[INSERT NAME]**.

So that we can contact you to remind you about the focus group or in case there are any changes, can you please confirm your name and contact information for me? **[READ INFO AND CHANGE AS NECESSARY.]**

First name _____

Last Name _____

Email _____

Day time phone number _____

Night time phone number _____

Thank you!

If the respondent refuses to give his/her first or last name or phone number please assure them that this information will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the privacy law and that it is used strictly to contact them to confirm their attendance and to inform them of any changes to the focus group. If they still refuse THANK & TERMINATE.

Appendix B: Moderation Guide

Introduction to Procedures (10 minutes)

Thank you all for joining this online focus group!

- Introduce moderator/firm and welcome participants to the focus group.
 - Thanks for attending.
 - My name is [INSERT MODERATOR NAME] and I work with Quorus Consulting. As mentioned when we invited you to participate in this discussion group, we're conducting research on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).
 - The purpose is to obtain feedback on some changes being considered for public weather-related information available on Government of Canada websites and mobile apps. Your honest feedback is extremely important to ECCC and will assist them in making improvements when it comes to online weather.
 - The discussion will last up to 90 minutes.
 - If you have a cell phone or other electronic device, please turn it off.
- Describe focus group.
 - A discussion group is a "round table" discussion. We will also be asking you to answer survey questions from time to time to help guide the discussion.
 - My job is to facilitate the discussion, keeping us on topic and on time.
 - Your job is to offer your opinions on the topics and questions I'll bring up tonight/today. Your honest opinion is valued.
 - There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a knowledge test.
 - Everyone's opinion is important and should be respected.
 - We want you to speak up even if you feel your opinion might be different from others. Your opinion may reflect that of other Canadians.
 - To participate in this session, please make sure your webcam and your microphone are on and that you can hear me clearly. If you are not speaking, I would encourage you to mute your line to keep background noise to a minimum...just remember to remove yourself from mute when you want to speak!
 - I will be sharing my screen to show you some things.

- We might use the chat function. **[MODERATOR EXPLAINS HOW TO ACCESS THE ZOOM CHAT FEATURE DEPENDING ON THE DEVICE THE PARTICIPANT IS USING]**. Let's do a quick test right now - please open the chat window and send the group a short message (e.g., Hello everyone). If you have an answer to a question and I don't get to ask you specifically, please type your response in there. We will be reviewing all chat comments at the completion of this project.
- Explanations.
 - Please note that anything you say during these groups will be held in the strictest confidence. We do not attribute comments to specific people. Our report summarizes the findings from the groups but does not mention anyone by name.
 - The final report for this session, and others, can be accessed through the Library of Parliament or Library and Archives Canada's website.
 - Your responses will in no way affect your dealings with the Government of Canada.
 - The session is being audio-video recorded for report writing purposes / verify feedback. These recordings are stored for up to 6 months and then destroyed.
 - Some of my colleagues from the Government of Canada who are involved in this project are watching this session and this is only so they can hear the comments first-hand. As observers, they are not allowed to do their own recording or take a screenshot of any part of the session, and neither can participants.
- Please note that I am not an employee of the Government of Canada and may not be able to answer questions about what we will be discussing. If questions do come up over the course of the group, we will try to get answers for you before we wrap up the session.

Any questions?

INTRODUCTIONS:

GENPOP GROUPS: Let's go around – please tell us your name and where you live. Since we will be talking about the weather today, tell the group what the weather is like today in your part of the country!

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS: Let's go around – please tell us your name, your occupation and briefly how the weather impacts the work-related decisions you make.

Experiences with Weather Information (10 min)

During this session, we will want to stay focused on weather information that you access online – so this would be information you look up on a website or using an app on your smartphone or tablet.

[MODERATOR INSTRUCTIONS: Quickly cover up to “What makes you use a specific source over another?” and then spend more time on that bullet]

Let's start off with a broad question. How do you typically access weather information online?

- Which apps or websites do you typically use?
 - **IF NEEDED:** Does anyone use the Weather.gc.ca website, Environment Canada website, Government of Canada website OR WeatherCan App?
 - How do these government sources compare to other sources of weather information that you have accessed?
 - In a nutshell, what do you like about the way weather information is presented on that app/website?
 - What makes you use a specific source over another?
 - **IF NEEDED:** Do you feel one is more reliable? More accurate? Are there specific features you like?

Hazard Simplification (15 min)

The Government of Canada is planning on implementing various changes to alerting information that is available on their website and mobile app. One of these changes is the use of colour-coded weather alerts – yellow, orange and red, which you may have already seen as they were implemented in November 2025.

A hazard is a kind of weather element – wind, rain, snow, etc.

The Government of Canada currently issues alerts for around 28 types of hazards. **[SHOW CURRENT HAZARD LIST]**

Current hazard list (34 watches, warnings, advisories and statements)	
1.	Air Quality Warning
2.	Arctic Outflow Warning
3.	Blizzard Warning
4.	Blowing Snow Advisory
5.	Coastal Flooding Warning
6.	Dust Storm Warning
7.	Extreme Cold Warning
8.	Flash Freeze Warning
9.	Fog Advisory
10.	Freezing Drizzle Advisory
11.	Freezing Rain Warning
12.	Frost Advisory
13.	Heat Warning
14.	Hurricane Warning
15.	Hurricane Watch
16.	Les Suêtes Wind Warning

17. Rainfall Warning
18. Severe Thunderstorm Warning
19. Severe Thunderstorm Watch
20. Smog Warning
21. Snow Squall Warning
22. Snow Squall Watch
23. Snowfall Warning
24. Special Air Quality Statement
25. Tornado Warning
26. Tornado Watch
27. Tropical Cyclone Information Statement
28. Tropical Storm Warning
29. Tropical Storm Watch
30. Weather advisory
31. Wind warning
32. Winter Storm Warning
33. Winter Storm Watch
34. Wreckhouse Wind Warning

They are proposing to move to a list of fewer than 20 alert types that focus more on what the weather will *do* rather than what the weather *is*. Under this approach, similar hazards would be nested under a broader category based on the impact they have.

Proposed hazard list (colour=yellow, orange or red according to new colour-coding)
1. <colour> warning – air quality
2. <colour> warning – coastal flooding
3. <colour> warning – cold (would absorb extreme cold, windchill, and arctic outflow warnings)
4. <colour> warning – heat
5. <colour> warning – frost
6. <colour> watch / warning – hurricane
7. <colour> warning – rain
8. <colour> warning – snow
9. <colour> watch / warning – snow squall
10. <colour> warning – storm (would be a combination of at least 2 hazards like wind and rain, and described in a subtitle or bracket)
11. <colour> watch / warning – thunderstorm
12. <colour> warning – ice (would absorb freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and flash freeze warnings but describe them in a subtitle or bracket)
13. <colour> watch / warning – tornado
14. <colour> watch / warning – tropical storm
15. <colour> warning – visibility (changing from advisories, would describe in the subtitle or bracket that it's for blizzard, blowing snow, fog or dust)

16. <colour> warning – wind (would absorb existing Les Suetes, Wreckhouse, and Chinook wind warnings)

Although most would remain the same, the main simplified alerts would be consolidated and based on their similar impact:

ICE: would include freezing rain, freezing drizzle, flash freeze

WIND: would replace specifying Les Suetes, Wreckhouse, Chinook/downslope winds

VISIBILITY: would include fog, dust, snow, blowing snow, blizzard (at the moderate/high-extreme impact)

Let me show you a “before and after” example:

[MODERATOR TO SHARE A BEFORE AND AFTER EXAMPLE FOR VISIBILITY]

Current approach



New approach



In this example, alerts related to blizzard, blowing snow, fog or dust would simply produce an alert for “visibility”, since that is the impact for these types of weather events. As you can see, the specific type of hazard (in this example “blizzard”) would be included in the descriptive text of the main warning banner, as a second line or subtext.

- What is your overall impression of this approach to alert simplification?
 - If the goal is to make sure you quickly understand the impact of a weather situation, how effective is this approach?
 - Would you need to click on the alert to learn more, or is a brief description of the impact enough?

- Do the categories make sense?
 - Is anything unclear? If so, what?
 - **IF NEEDED:** Are there any more categories that you feel should be simplified/consolidated?
 - If you received a warning for ice on your smartphone, what would that mean to you? **AFTER A FEW REACTIONS, PROBE:** ...would you understand that the warning relates to icy surfaces? Help me understand this a bit more.
 - **[IF NEEDED]:** Should this alert instead be titled “ICY SURFACES”?

Simplifying alert types (7 min)

ECCC issues various alerts for weather ranging from non urgent weather information that might also be a heads up (special weather statement), to a “watch” where it means conditions/ingredients are favourable for severe weather, to a “warning” (some cast as “advisories”) which means the hazard or severe weather is imminent with high certainty, or occurring right now. You would receive those alerts on your phone or see them on the website, or on other websites or apps that carry ECCC official alerts.

ECCC also publishes on their website/app short forecaster notes giving context and heads up about weather, known as MetNotes but you need to seek them out, they are not sent as alerts across all systems.

Further to our discussion about simplifying the hazards, the Government of Canada is also considering reducing the number of alert types.

From least urgent to most urgent, the different alert types are:

[MODERATOR TO SHARE SCREEN]:

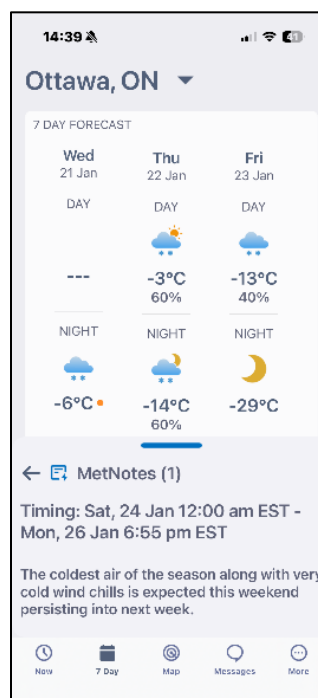
- E. **Special Weather Statement** –used when a weather hazard is not yet at a watch or warning level, or for other information related to a weather event
- F. **Watch** - where conditions are favourable for the development of weather or an environmental hazard, but the occurrence, location, and/or timing of the expected hazardous condition(s) is still too uncertain to issue a warning. It is intended to heighten public awareness of the potential impact of the event and serves as a lead-up to a warning.
- G. **Advisory** - where a certain weather or environmental hazard (for example air quality, frost and tsunami) is either occurring, imminent or is expected to occur.
- H. **Warning** - where a hazardous weather or environmental event that poses a significant threat to public safety and property is certain or imminent.

Currently, you get a notification on your WeatherCan app or the ECCC website, or whichever other platform carries ECCC alerts, for all of these types of alerts.

- Have you noticed these alerts coming across your device?
 - Have you seen all of these alert types, or only some?
 - In the future, would you like to be sent notifications for each of these alert types, or are there certain types of alerts that could be discontinued where you could find the information another way?

There are also forecast notes on the ECCC website and app called “MetNotes” (MN) that are not pushed. **[MODERATOR TO SHOW EXAMPLES]**

Forecast						
	Thu 22 Jan	Fri 23 Jan	Sat 24 Jan	Sun 25 Jan	Mon 26 Jan	Tue 27 Jan
	 -3°C 60% Chance of flurries	 -13°C 40% Chance of flurries	 -18°C Sunny	 -18°C Cloudy	 -11°C Cloudy	 -10°C 40% Chance of flurries
Tonight	 -6°C* A few flurries	 -14°C 60% Chance of flurries	 -29°C Clear	 -30°C Clear	 -20°C 70% Chance of snow	 -21°C Cloudy periods
* Denotes an abnormal temperature trend						
MetNotes (1): A message from your forecaster						
Valid: 12:00 AM EST Saturday 24 January 2026 - 6:55 PM EST Monday 26 January 2026 The coldest air of the season along with very cold wind chills is expected this weekend persisting into next week.						
Forecast issued: 3:30 PM EST Wednesday 21 January 2026						
Tonight	Flurries. Amount 2 to 4 cm. Wind south 20 km/h gusting to 40 becoming light early this evening. Wind becoming south 20 late this evening. Temperature rising to minus 3 by morning. Wind chill minus 16 this evening and minus 7 overnight.					
Thu, 22 Jan	A mix of sun and cloud with 60 percent chance of flurries. Wind west 20 km/h gusting to 40. High minus 3. Wind chill minus 9 in the morning and minus 16 in the afternoon. UV index 1 or low.					
Night	Partly cloudy with 60 percent chance of flurries. Wind southwest 30 km/h. Low minus 14. Wind chill minus 16 in the evening and minus 22 overnight.					



- Have you noticed the MetNotes before?
 - Should MetNotes be included in the pushed alerts when available?

PROBE IN ALL GROUPS:

- Do you currently pay attention to frost advisories? Let's get a show of hands here.
 - **IF YES:** How does forecasted frost information help you plan or make decisions?
- Do you feel that frost advisories should continue to trigger an alert, or is it enough to just include frost information in the general forecast? Explain your preference.
- **IF INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO RECEIVE FROST ALERTS:** What if you instead set your weather app to notify you when the temperature will drop below 0°? Would this be sufficient?

WRAP (Weather Risk Awareness Process) (30 min)

We will now shift focus to discuss a new offering that ECCC has been working on. However, I first want to get a sense of how you are currently using weather information for planning.

- How far ahead do you typically find weather information useful or interesting?
 - If you noticed poor weather was forecasted for the day of your plans, how far ahead would you make a decision on whether to cancel/reschedule/change plans?
 - Does this change depending on the type of weather or hazard? For example, would you prefer to hear about potential multi-hazard storms sooner than you would a single rain event or wind event?
 - How about depending on the likelihood of the hazard occurring – does this have any impact on how far ahead of an event you would want information about the hazard?
 - How much detail would you be looking for? (E.g., just a sense of clear or severe weather, or would you want more specifics on timing, location, amounts, certainty?)
- If an early indication of a severe weather event was to appear on the website, would you keep checking in the following days to check for updates, or would you wait for a warning to be issued?
 - Would you like to be notified of potential weather events (e.g., Impactful rainfall for snowfall events, freezing rain, damaging winds)?
 - **IF YES:** What information would you want included in this type of notification?

Let's discuss hazards that are short-lived, with short notice, like thunderstorms, tornadoes and snow squalls. Some time before a thunderstorm might develop, when conditions are favourable for thunderstorm development (moisture, wind, and an unstable atmosphere), ECCC will issue a thunderstorm "watch". Then, when a thunderstorm is seen by observation or radar, a thunderstorm warning is issued.

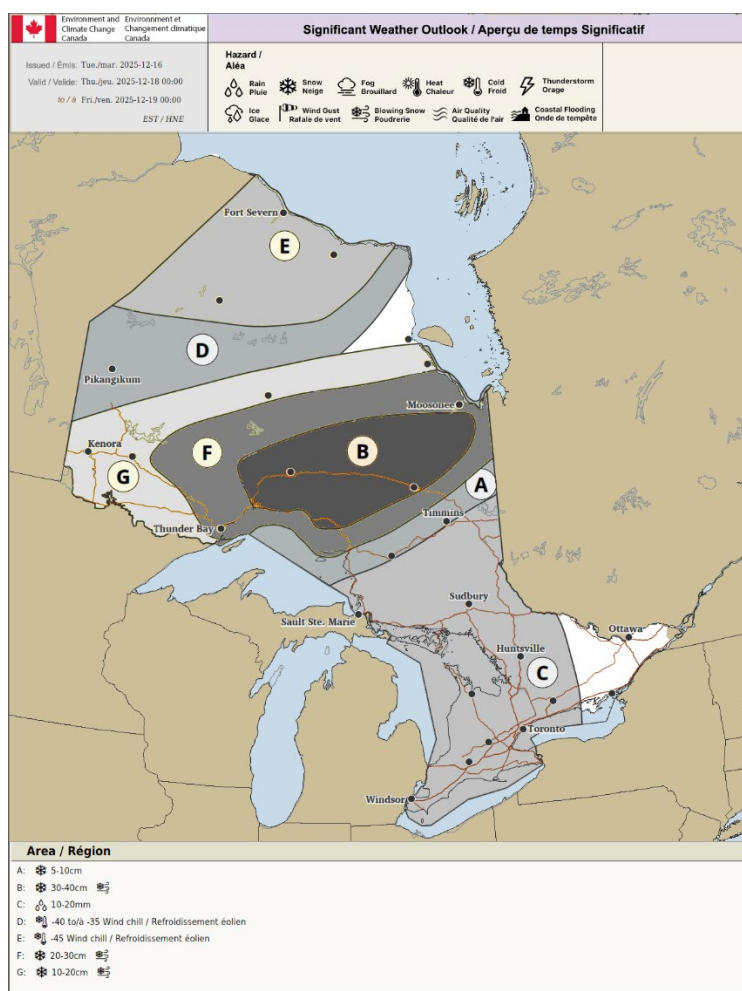
- How would you want to be warned about this type of weather?
 - Would you want an alert issued when there is a thunderstorm watch, or only if/when a warning is needed?

On the topic of severe weather, I'd like to get your feedback on an approach we'll just call an "Outlook", and it looks like this: **[MODERATOR TO SHARE SCREEN WITH MAP]**

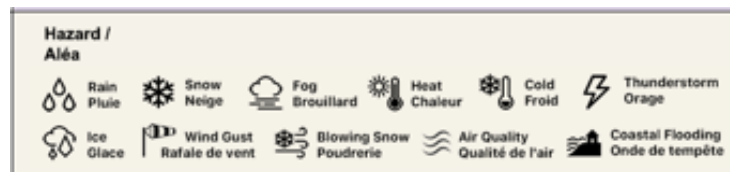
An Outlook shows expected weather hazard information for certain geographic areas of Canada. They can be issued daily for a 24-hour period about a day to two days ahead of potential severe weather. Outlooks would not be updated with active severe weather alert information; users are asked to check the forecast or for the latest alerts for the most up-to-date information.

As you can see, shaded and outlined areas on the map are referenced with a weather hazard icon below which then has numerical values associated with it, like so many mm of rain, the anticipated temperature range, or how strong the wind in km/h might be.

They are meant to provide a heads-up on potentially severe weather a bit more into the future than a standard next 24-hour forecast would. They are not colour-coded as they are not intended to forecast impacts, just the potential for severe weather.



- What is your overall impression of this visual for an Outlook on upcoming severe weather?
 - Noting that the Outlook would not use the same colour coding system as the new alerts (yellow, orange, red), how do you feel about the use of colour? Does the monochrome approach work, or should there be more contrast?
- Does having this map preview the forecasted weather a couple of days in advance about a 24-hour period provide the information you need? Why or why not?
 - **IF NEEDED:** Would you prefer multiple graphics, each covering a shorter duration (e.g., 12-hour periods)?
- Is the outlook concept sufficient as a heads up? Or would you still want to have a watch (as previously defined) that is pushed out on the alerting system?
 - **IF NEEDED:** Please explain your preference.
- What are the key types of weather hazards/types you would expect to see on this type of graphic? **[SHOW A ZOOM OF THE LIST OF WEATHER HAZARDS]**



- **IF NEEDED:** Should it differ based on the season (e.g., summer hazards and winter hazards, with some overlap for elements like temperature, rain and wind)?
- Is there a maximum number of hazard types that should be included to keep the Outlook simple and efficient?
- What are your thoughts on the legend? **[SHOW A ZOOM OF THE LEGEND]**

Area / Région	
A:	5-10cm
B:	30-40cm
C:	10-20mm
D:	-40 to/à -35 Wind chill / Refroidissement éolien
E:	-45 Wind chill / Refroidissement éolien
F:	20-30cm
G:	10-20cm

- What information would you need included in the legend to understand the Outlook? (e.g., seasonal icons, full legend).

- Are simplified graphics sufficient for you to get the weather information you would need to inform your decision making?
 - Would you need a text description to explain the graphics?
 - **IF YES:** What level of detail would you need? (e.g., a sentence, a paragraph...)
- What do you think about the following options as a name for this type of product?

MODERATOR TO SHARE SCREEN WITH THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

- G. Significant Weather Outlook
- H. Severe Weather Outlook
- I. Hazard Risk Outlook
- J. Storm Potential Outlook
- K. Early Weather Insight

- Again, use the chat and type a letter to select your preferred name. Let's discuss your choice and your thoughts on the other options shown.
 - Having seen these possible names, do you have any suggestions of your own?

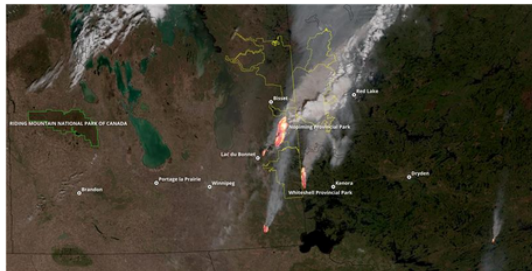
Text-Based Weather Information (13 min)

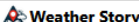
ECCC is considering using direct output from computer models to generate the forecast for any point in Canada. To keep the voice and knowledge of the meteorologists front and centre, ECCC is proposing a section of the app and website for each location be added which would have some brief text and a graphic to describe extra context about the weather, upcoming potential severe weather, and educational or safety information related to that location. Alert banners would still be across the top but this would be extra text and graphic information.

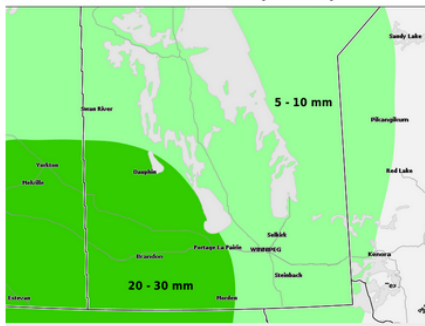
MODERATOR TO SHARE:

There would be up to 3 tabs/panels per story, the blue background highlights which panel the reader is currently looking at.

EXAMPLE 1:

Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
	The satellite image on the left shows the smoke plumes in southeastern Manitoba moving to the northeast and into northwestern Ontario. • Southwesterly winds will continue to disperse smoke to the northeast from today to Thursday, keeping Winnipeg and west of it nice and clear. • Hot and dry conditions will continue until this weekend. Wildfires may spread and grow due to these conditions with moderate southwest winds.	
A satellite image of wildfire smoke in southeastern Manitoba and western Ontario on May 13, 2025 at 2PM. The white-coloured patches on the top left are clouds.		
 Weather Story		Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM

Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
	Follow Official Instructions Leave immediately if evacuation orders are issued. Don't wait until the last minute.	
	Drive Safely if Evacuating Keep headlights on, drive slowly, and be prepared for poor visibility due to smoke.	
	Limit Smoke Exposure Stay indoors with windows and doors closed. Use an air purifier if possible. Avoid strenuous outdoor activities.	
Health symptoms to look for during a wildfire event.		
		
Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM		

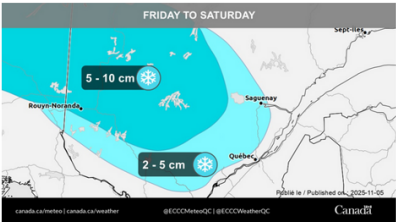
Satellite Image of the Smoke	Health Symptoms during a Wildfire Event	Some Relief Possible Early Next Week
Shows Possible Monday and Tuesday  Total rainfall amounts for Monday and Tuesday.	Some showers are possible in southeastern Manitoba as an upper trough pattern arrives. Rainfall amounts and the duration of the rain probably won't be enough to put out all the fires. • A lot of uncertainty about how much relief there will be. It also depends on how much wildfires grow prior to early next week. • New fires may also start with lightning strikes if thunderstorms develop early next week. • Prepare for smoky conditions to return midweek after the showers clear up.	
 Weather Story		Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 12:00:00 AM

EXAMPLE 2:

This is an example of a single page story. Rather than switching between tabs, this format would show one page at a time and the user would switch pages using the “next page” button at the bottom right. On the screen you will see a preview of two separate pages for the same weather event.

Coming Up on Friday and Saturday: First Significant Snowfall of the Season

FRIDAY TO SATURDAY



Total Snowfall Accumulations Expected from Friday to Saturday.

Time to get your snow brushes out!

- Abitibi to Saguenay: 5 to 10 cm
- Outaouais and closer to the St. Lawrence River: 2 to 5 cm
- **Possible** rain mixed with snow near the St. Lawrence River

A few tips as you head out into the winter wonderland:

- **Take Your Time**, particularly during the Friday evening commute. The ground may get slushy, slippery, and messy, so give yourself extra travel time and drive carefully.
- The **first snow** is always a surprise! Prepare to shovel, salt, or sand the surfaces.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 11:53:00 AM

Next Page

Coming Up on Friday and Saturday: First Significant Snowfall of the Season



Be #WeatherWise

Canada

More safety tips for winter weather.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 11:53:00 AM

Previous Page

EXAMPLE 3:

Storm Conditions Relaxing Today

Location	Maximum wind gust (km/h)
Race Rock	119
Hope Airport	113
Point Atkinson Lighthouse	102
Victoria Gonzales	100
Trial Island Lighthouse	85
Vancouver International Airport	76

Observations of the strongest wind gust over the B.C. south coast on December 17, 2025.

The strongest winds are behind us now and winds will continue to ease this morning.

• The good news is that we are **not** anticipating another windstorm in the next few days.

• Scattered showers are expected for the rest of today (Thursday, December 18).

More pleasant weather is coming up.

• Mainly cloudy on Friday and this weekend.

• Outdoor activities are mostly good to go!

• A few isolated showers are possible.

Weather Story

Issued Time: 12/22/2025, 2:55:55 PM

- Would you use this information in your day to day or week to week planning. If not, why?
- Would you seek out this information or are you more inclined to just check the hourly or daily forecast or observations?
 - How often might you refer to/read this section or check for updates? Would you want to be flagged when you open the page and you have a new Tab or an updated Tab?
 - Is this something you would be most likely to read on an app on your phone or on a website on a computer, or both?
- What content would be interesting for you? ...and would this depend on the weather?
 - **IF NEEDED:** ...severe weather? Storm summaries? Safety preparedness information? Radars of storm paths? Educational information, such as how a tornado forms?

[MODERATOR TO SHOW VERSION OF WEATHER STORY WITH 3 TABS]

This section would be up to 3 panels across the page which you could switch between.

- Should the panels be organized chronologically (e.g., most recent events on the left to furthest into the future on the right) or focused on the biggest impact on the left?
- What do you think would be an appropriate name for this section of the website?
 - **AFTER HEARING A FEW SUGGESTIONS, PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING ON A SLIDE:** Here are a few other ideas – is there one you really like?
 - “Forecaster Notes”, “Forecast in Focus”, “Weather Story”, “Notes from the Meteorologists”, “Weather Update” “Messages from Meteorologists”
 - Any other ideas?

Conclusion (2 min)

[MODERATOR TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ARE SENT VIA THE CHAT BOX DIRECTLY TO THE MODERATOR AND PROBE ON ANY ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INTEREST.]

- **[TIME PERMITTING]** Of what you have been shown tonight, what did you find the most interesting or useful?
- This concludes what we needed to cover tonight. Does anybody have any final thoughts or comments to pass along?

We really appreciate you taking the time to come down here to share your views. Your input is very important.