



## Weather Warnings: Why You Might Get an Alert Even If the Storm Isn't Headed Your Way

The information provided is based on official guidance and documentation from the National Weather Service (NWS), FEMA, and emergency management best practices.

Let's talk about why you might receive a weather warning for your county, even if the storm is nowhere near your community. This can be confusing. Here's what's happening behind the scenes.

### 1. How the National Weather Service (NWS) Issues Warnings:

- The NWS uses polygon-based warnings. That means when a severe thunderstorm or tornado is detected, they draw a polygon around the specific area expected to be impacted, based on radar, forecast data, and storm movement.
- So technically, only the area within the polygon is considered "in the warning."

### 2. Warnings Are Sent Out by County:

- Even though the warning is drawn by polygon, mass notification systems (like text alerts, weather radios, or community apps) often still send alerts based on entire counties, not just the polygon.
- Why? Many alerting systems are designed to trigger at the county level, so if even a small part of your county is inside the warning polygon, the system notifies everyone in the county.

### 3. Community Names in Warnings:

- The NWS includes a list of cities, towns, and landmarks that are:
  - Inside the polygon, and
  - Sometimes just outside the polygon but close enough to be monitored.
- This helps people better understand which areas are most likely affected. It also means that if your town is near, but not in, the path, it might still be mentioned in the warning details.

### 4. What This Means for You:

- You might receive alerts even if the storm isn't coming directly to your location.
- It's not an error—it's a system limitation based on how alerts are distributed.
- Always read the full text of the warning (not just the headline). It often lists the exact communities at risk.
- Keep in mind, storms can and do change directions.

**✓ Tip:** If you would like to receive location-precise warnings, based on your exact GPS location, you can download apps such as FEMA App, Weather Radio by WDT, or RadarScope. Understanding this system helps reduce "alert fatigue" and keeps trust in emergency warnings strong. Stay safe, stay informed.

Common hashtags used regarding weather communications and on social media.  
#WeatherAwareness #NWS #EmergencyAlerts #SevereWeather #WeatherWarningTips  
#EmergencyManagement