

Gale & Strong Wind Warning Terminology

Gale	Winds of at least Beaufort force 8 (34-40 knots) or gusts reaching 43-51 knots
Severe Gale	Winds of force 9 (41-47 knots) or gusts reaching 52-60 knots
Storm	Winds of force 10 (48-55 knots) or gusts reaching 61-68 knots
Violent Storm	Winds of force 11 (56-63 knots) or gusts of 69 knots or more
Hurricane force*	Winds of force 12 (64 knots or more)

* Note: The term used is "hurricane force", however the term "hurricane" on its own means an intense tropical cyclone of the kind that affects the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. In the China Sea, it would be called a typhoon. Such tropical cyclones are not experienced in British waters.

Timescales

Imminent	Expected within 6 hours of the time of issue
Soon	Expected between 6 and 12 hours from time of issue
Later	Expected more than 12 hours of the time of issue
Perhaps* Later	Used when a gale is considered possible in the later period but forecast is not sufficiently sure to issue a warning

* Note: If there is doubt about gales in the imminent or soon category, the forecast may say "perhaps locally" or some such phrase, BUT a warning MUST be issued.

Visibility

Very Poor	Visibility less than 1,000m
Poor	Visibility between 1,000m and 2 nautical miles
Moderate	Visibility between 2 and 5 nautical miles
Good	Visibility greater than 5 nautical miles

Movement (of pressure systems)

Slowly	Moving at less than 15 knots
Steadily	Moving at 15 to 25 knots
Rather quickly	Moving at 25 to 30 knots
Rapidly	Moving at 35 to 45 knots
Very rapidly	Moving at more than 45 knots

Pressure tendency in station reports

Note: For those more familiar with the millibar, 1 hPa = 1 mb

Rising (or falling) slowly	Rising (or falling) Pressure change of 1.6 to 3.5 hPa in the preceding three hours
Rising (or falling) quickly	Rising (or falling) Pressure change of 3.6 to 6.0 hPa in the preceding three hours
Rising (or falling) rapidly	Rising (or falling) Pressure change of more than 6.0 hPa in the preceding three hours
Now rising (or falling)	Pressure has been falling (rising) or steady in the preceding three hours, but at the time of observation was definitely rising (falling)

Wind direction & change

Wind direction	Indicates the direction from which the wind is blowing
Backing	Indicates the wind direction will change in an anti-clockwise direction
Veering	Indicates the wind direction will change in a clockwise direction
Cyclonic	Indicates there will be considerable change in wind direction as the centre of a low pressure system passes
Variable	Indicates the wind will be light and may move around directionally as the centre of a high pressure system passes

Sea state (wave height)

Smooth	Wave height between 0.2 & 0.5m
Slight	Wave height between 0.5 & 1.25m
Moderate	Wave height between 1.25 & 2.5m
Rough	Wave height between 2.5 & 4m
Very rough	Wave height between 4 & 6m
High	Wave height between 6 & 9m
Very high	Wave height between 9 & 14m
Phenomenal	Wave height more than 14m