

8. Weather Phenomena. The weather as reported in the METAR code represents a significant change in the way weather is currently reported. In METAR, weather is reported in the format:

Intensity/Proximity/Descriptor/Precipitation/Obstruction to visibility/Other

NOTE-

The “/” above and in the following descriptions (except as the separator between the temperature and dew point) are for separation purposes in this publication and do not appear in the actual METARs.

(a) **Intensity** applies only to the first type of precipitation reported. A “-” denotes light, no symbol denotes moderate, and a “+” denotes heavy.

(b) **Proximity** applies to and reported only for weather occurring in the vicinity of the airport (between 5 and 10 miles of the point(s) of observation). It is denoted by the letters “VC.” (Intensity and “VC” will not appear together in the weather group).

(c) **Descriptor.** These eight descriptors apply to the precipitation or obstructions to visibility:

- TS thunderstorm
- DR low drifting
- SH showers
- MI shallow
- FZ freezing
- BC patches
- BL blowing
- PR partial

NOTE-

Although “TS” and “SH” are used with precipitation and may be preceded with an intensity symbol, the intensity still applies to the precipitation, not the descriptor.

(d) **Precipitation.** There are nine types of precipitation in the METAR code:

- RA rain
- DZ drizzle
- SN snow
- GR hail (1/4” or greater)
- GS small hail/snow pellets
- PL ice pellets
- SG snow grains
- IC ice crystals (diamond dust)
- UP unknown precipitation
(automated stations only)

(e) **Obstructions to visibility.** There are eight types of obscuration phenomena in the METAR code (obscurations are any phenomena in the atmosphere, other than precipitation, that reduce horizontal visibility):

- FG fog (vsby less than 5/8 mile)
- HZ haze
- FU smoke
- PY spray
- BR mist (vsby 5/8 – 6 miles)
- SA sand
- DU dust
- VA volcanic ash

NOTE-

Fog (FG) is observed or forecast only when the visibility is less than five-eighths of mile, otherwise mist (BR) is observed or forecast.

(f) **Other.** There are five categories of other weather phenomena which are reported when they occur:

- SQ squall
- SS sandstorm
- DS duststorm
- PO dust/sand whirls
- FC funnel cloud
- +FC tornado/waterspout

Examples:

- TSRA thunderstorm with moderate rain
- +SN heavy snow
- RA FG light rain and fog
- BRHZ mist and haze
(visibility 5/8 mile or greater)
- FZDZ freezing drizzle
- VCSH rain shower in the vicinity
- +SHRASNPL .. heavy rain showers, snow, ice pellets (intensity indicator refers to the predominant rain)

9. Sky Condition. The sky condition as reported in METAR represents a significant change from the way sky condition is currently reported. In METAR, sky condition is reported in the format:

Amount/Height/(Type) or Indefinite Ceiling/Height