



Precipitation



Precipitation can be liquid (rain) or solid (snow, hail, sleet). A lack of precipitation can cause droughts. Too much precipitation can cause floods.



The National Weather Service forecasts precipitation. The NWS also sends out Watches and Warnings ahead of major precipitation events. NOAA researchers study how different forms of precipitation occur, where and how often.



Rain

Droplets form in a cloud around dust, pollution or other molecule in the cloud



Sleet

Rain or melted snow freezes after leaving the cloud, but before reaching the ground



Hail

Droplets freeze in a storm cloud and are lifted higher in the cloud where more frozen water accumulates



Snow Pellets

Snow melts and precipitation forms around a snow crystal, less than 1/4 inch diameter



Snow

Ice crystals, formed individually in clouds in the form of stars with six branches



Most Rainfall in 24 hours

71.8 inches
Reunion Island
January 8, 1966

Most Snowfall in 24 hours

75.8 inches
Silver Lake, Colorado
April 15, 1921

Most Precipitation in 1 year

1,041.8 inches
Sohra, India
Aug 1, 1860 - July 31, 1861