

Types of Weather Fronts



When large masses of warm air and cold air meet, they do not mix. Instead, they form a front, usually hundreds of miles long. When a front passes, the weather changes. The chart describes the four main types of fronts and the weather changes each type brings.

Type of Front	How It Forms	Weather It Brings
<p>Cold front</p>	Forms when a cold air mass pushes under a warm air mass, forcing the warm air to rise.	Thunderheads can form as the moisture in the warm air mass rises, cools, and condenses. As the front moves through, cool, fair weather is likely to follow.
<p>Warm front</p>	Forms when a moist, warm air mass slides up and over a cold air mass.	As the warm air mass rises, it condenses into a broad area of clouds. A warm front brings gentle rain or light snow, followed by warmer, milder weather.
<p>Stationary front</p>	Forms when warm and cold air meet and neither air mass has the force to move the other. They remain <i>stationary</i> , or "standing still."	Where the warm and cold air meet, clouds and fog form, and it may rain or snow. Can bring many days of clouds and precipitation.
<p>Occluded Front</p>	Forms when a warm air mass gets caught between two cold air masses. The warm air mass rises as the cool air masses push and meet in the middle.	The temperature drops as the warm air mass is <i>occluded</i> , or "cut off," from the ground and pushed upward. Can bring strong winds and heavy precipitation.