

Meteorologist

Read the atmosphere with math, radar and models, then tell people what is coming and how sure you are.

TYPICAL PAY

\$99,070

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$53k to \$162k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**National Weather Service offices,
television stations, airlines, privat...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Take the hardest math you can get to, plus physics. Calculus before you arrive at college is a real advantage.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in meteorology or atmospheric science** 4 years
 Roughly 100 universities offer one. Penn State, the University of Oklahoma, Texas A&M University and the University of Wisconsin are among the biggest.
- 3 Hit the federal course requirements** Inside the degree
 The National Weather Service asks for at least 24 semester hours of meteorology or atmospheric science, at least 6 semester hours of physics and at least 3 semester hours of differential equations. Check this against your degree plan in year one, not year four.
- 4 Internships** Summers
 A summer at a forecast office, a research lab or a television station. This is how most people get their first job.
- 5 First job, or a master's** 0 to 2 more years
 Operational forecasting and broadcast work start with a bachelor's. Research, modeling and most federal science roles want a master's or a doctorate.

Pros and cons

- + Real science applied to something people care about daily
- + Federal jobs come with strong benefits and a pension
- + Warnings you issue can save lives
- The field is small and hiring grows slowly
- Shift work, nights, weekends and holidays for years
- Entry broadcast pay is genuinely low

Good to know

Balloons are still launched by hand, twice a day

Around 90 National Weather Service sites release a weather balloon at the same two moments every day, all around the world. The instrument package radios back temperature, humidity and wind until...

Most meteorologists are never on television

Broadcast is the visible slice of a mostly invisible profession. Far more meteorologists work in forecast offices, airlines, the military, energy companies and research than in front of a camera.

Optional boosts

Aviation meteorology. Energy and commodity forecasting. Broadcast. Forensic meteorology.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Atmospheric and Space Scientists
 National Weather Service: careers in meteorology
 Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences
 USAJOBS, the federal government's official hiring site

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/meteorologist>



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