

**Met Office**

## Who is the Met Office?

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You may have heard of the Met Office on television, radio, in the newspapers and online. However, you may not know that we produce weather forecasts for the UK 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – in fact we issue a forecast every second of every day - far beyond the services that make us a household name.

But who exactly is the Met Office and what services do we provide not just for the UK but also across the globe? In this short video we'll explain who the Met Office is and what we do.

The Met Office is the UK's National Weather Service. We have a long history of weather forecasting and have been working in the area of climate change science for more than two decades. We are a trading fund within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and we operate on a commercial basis with set targets to meet.

For over 150 years we've pioneered the science that makes today's advanced weather and climate forecasting possible. But how did the Met Office first begin and who created it?

The Met Office was established as a small part of the Board of Trade in 1854 by Vice-Admiral Robert FitzRoy. Its aim was to research the possibilities of forecasting the weather, mainly to protect the safety of ships and their crew at sea.

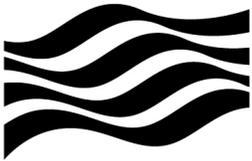
FitzRoy developed the first storm warning service, achieved by using canvas covered frames in different shapes to alert ships to dangers. He also pioneered techniques for forecasting weather such as synoptic charts, where weather observations taken at the same time were drawn on a map to aid forecasting — a technique still used today.

FitzRoy's work laid the foundations for the Met Office's future at the forefront of this 'new science' and the innovation in providing services to the public. FitzRoy pioneered the first ever public weather forecast, published in the Times newspaper on the 1 August 1861 – beginning 150 years of the Met Office forecasting for the nation.

Since the very beginning the Met Office has been providing accurate weather forecasts - when it matters.

Everyday, our forecasts help keep airlines flying safely and efficiently, roads open and flowing freely, railway lines free of debris and seafarers safe in UK waters. We help utilities companies to keep the power on and the insurance industry to stay on top of risks. It's also thanks to us that major sporting events and festivals can run on time. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Organisations around the world use our computer models in their forecasts and we work hand in hand with the armed forces, providing vital information to keep Britain's troops safe. You might not know that we also provide forecasts for a number of natural hazards in the UK, such as the distribution of volcanic ash and the animal disease, blue tongue.



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But we don't just provide weather forecasts - we explore the many different aspects of weather and climate science. That means studying different influences on the environment from the behaviour of plankton and the effects of deforestation to the impact of urban heat islands and changes in solar output.

When we say our work is worldwide, we mean it covers everything from the seabed to the edge of space. This vast amount of data is then tailored to meet the needs of governments and businesses across the globe.

The Met Office Hadley Centre, opened in 1990 by the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, undertakes world-class research into the science of climate change and provides a focus in the UK for the scientific issues associated with climate change. Our scientists make significant contributions to peer-reviewed literature and to a variety of climate change reports, including the Assessment Reports of the IPCC. We advise on the impacts that a changing climate might have on energy, health, flooding and coastal defences, farming, water and food security across the globe and we are commissioned by government to provide the scientific evidence on which policy decisions can be based.

We aim to continually improve our forecast accuracy through research and investment in state of the art satellites and supercomputer technology. Our four day forecast is now as accurate as our one day forecast was 30 years ago. 80% of our next day maximum temperature forecasts are within 2 degrees and we are consistently one of the top two operational weather forecasting services in the world.

When we say our science is world-leading, we're one of the top two weather services, as well as the leading geosciences research centre, in the world.

For more information about what we do and the science behind how we do it, why not visit the Met Office website.