



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Michael R. Sandoval, Cabinet Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 23, 2022

High Winds expected with Blowing Dust
Road Conditions for Southern New Mexico

DEMING - The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) will be monitoring roadway conditions with law enforcement as high wind advisories have been issued by the National Weather Service. The NMDOT would like to remind the traveling public that blowing dust can escalate to blinding dust storms as they move quickly through remote areas. If you must travel, we recommend that you monitor local forecast conditions prior to starting your trip and visit our web site as roadway conditions change throughout the state of New Mexico.

Roadway advisories will be posted on www.nmroads.com, or by calling 511. If you are approaching a dust storm or caught in a dust storm, the below tips can help keep you safe.

- Avoid driving into or through a dust storm.
- Do not wait until poor visibility makes it difficult to safely pull off the roadway — do it as soon as possible. Completely exit the highway if you can.
- If you encounter a dust storm, check traffic immediately around your vehicle (front, back and to the side) and begin slowing down.
- Do not stop in the roadway; pull completely out of the travel lanes and as far into the right shoulder as possible.
- Stop the vehicle in a position ensuring it is a safe distance from the main roadway and away from where other vehicles may travel.
- Turn off all vehicle lights, including your emergency flashers.
- Set your emergency brake and take your foot off the brake.
- Stay in the vehicle with your seat belts buckled and wait for the storm to pass.
- Drivers of high-profile vehicles should be especially aware of changing weather conditions and travel at reduced speeds.

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NMDOT
Mobility for everyone

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Strong Winds and Blowing Dust Wednesday

National Weather Service El Paso TX / Santa Teresa NM

Issued: 9:00 AM Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Last Issuance

KEY POINTS

- Strong and gusty winds today with the potential for significant blowing dust.
- High fire danger for the lowlands, except Hudspeth County.
- Light snow showers for the Gila and adjacent lowlands tonight and early Thursday morning.
- Winds weaken overnight with breezy conditions continuing on Thursday.

AREAS IMPACTED

- Strong winds are expected across much of the area this afternoon. The strongest gusts with values approaching 55 to 70 mph will be west of the Rio Grande Valley, particularly along the Continental Divide. Winds will taper off to the east of the Rio Grande. Strong winds may cause downed tree limbs, minor structural damage to homes, and isolated power outages.
- Blowing dust will be likely in the afternoon and evening hours in the vicinity of the International Border and west Texas, with reduced visibility resulting in potentially hazardous driving conditions.
- High Fire Danger for the lowlands, except Hudspeth County.
- Light snow showers are expected across the Gila mountains tonight into Thursday morning, with generally up to an inch possible, though a few local totals of 2-3 inches will be possible for the higher peaks. Roadways will be slick where persistent snow showers develop.

DETAILS

Breezy winds continue during the morning hours, as an upper level storm system crosses from Arizona into New Mexico. This system combined with daytime heating leads to winds increasing quickly late morning and into the afternoon. However, a backdoor cold front was able to push into the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) farther west than expected this morning. Thus, the strongest winds in areas along the RGV will be delayed by a few hours. Therefore, there is a possibility winds will remain slightly lower along the aforementioned area, including El Paso and Las Cruces. The highest winds look to occur west of the Rio Grande Valley, particularly along the Continental Divide. A High Wind Warning is in effect from 10 AM to 7 PM, along with a wind advisory for areas east of the Rio Grande for the overnight period. Wind gusts up to 70 mph will be possible for the warned area. The strong winds will create areas of blowing dust, with significant reductions in visibility possible. We may issue a Blowing Dust Advisory late this morning or early this afternoon. The strong winds will also combine with very low relative humidity to create a high fire danger risk. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the lowlands, except Hudspeth County.

Cooler conditions arrive later Wednesday evening. Some precipitation looks possible for the Gila and areas along the Arizona border. Snow levels are expected to decrease to the desert floor quickly behind the front, so minor accumulations may occur in the desert lowlands. Mountains will see about an inch of snow with a few locations up to 2 to 3 inches. Thursday will be a cool and breezy day.

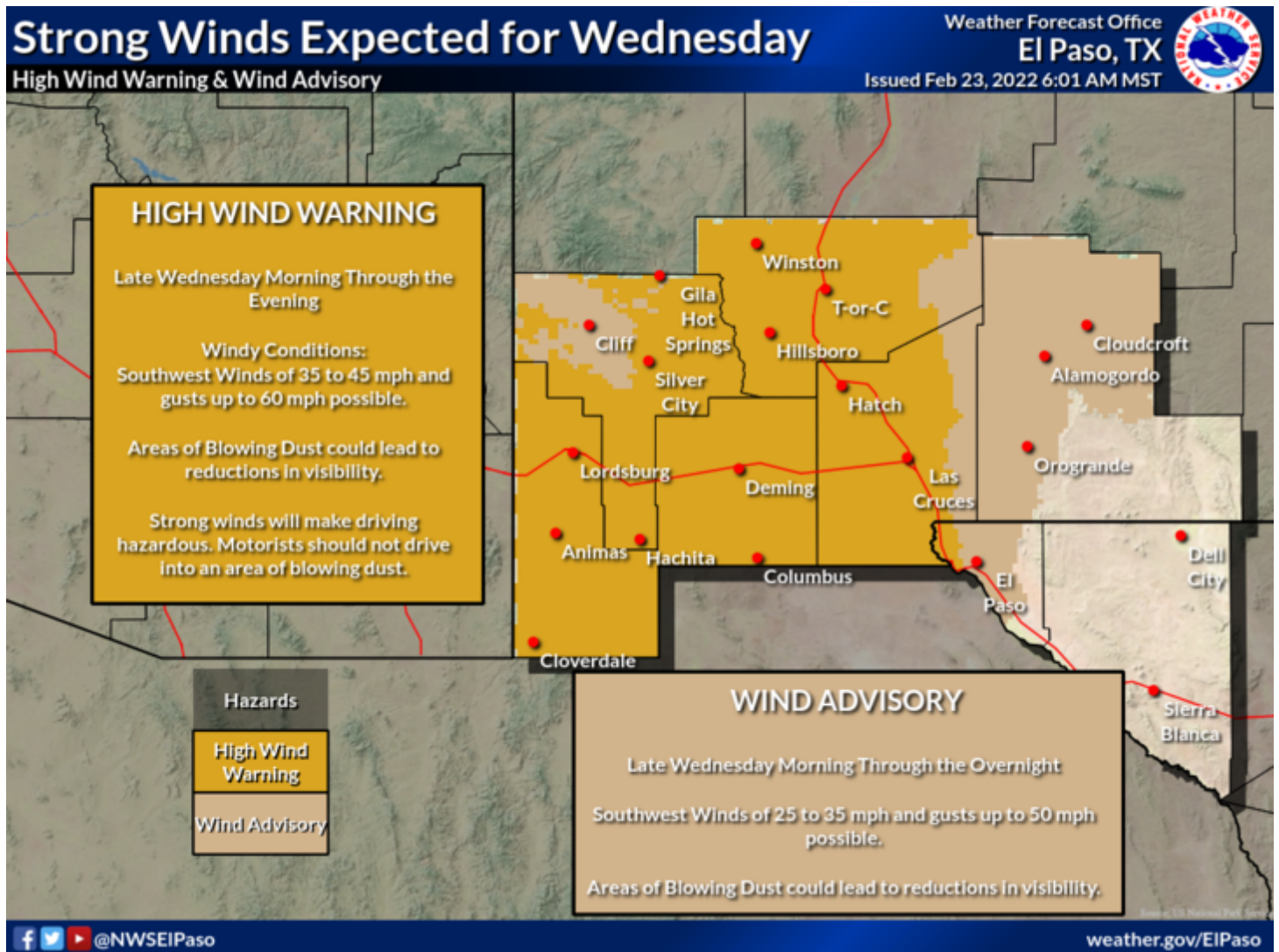
Confidence for strong winds on Wednesday is high, except for Las Cruces, El Paso, and adjacent areas

where confidence is moderate.

Confidence for blowing dust on Wednesday is moderate to high.

FORECAST GRAPHICS

Current Hazards for Today



High Fire Danger Wednesday Afternoon

Red Flag Warning

Weather Forecast Office

El Paso, TX

Issued Feb 22, 2022 1:49 PM MST



RED FLAG WARNING

From Noon to 7 PM Wednesday

Windy Conditions:
Southwest Winds of 25 to 35 mph

Very Dry Air:
Relative Humidity 8 to 15%

Rapid fire spread will be possible.
Outdoor burning is not recommended.

Mule
Creek

T-or-C

Cloudcroft

Alamogordo

Silver
City

Hatch

Lordsburg

Deming

Las
Cruces

Orogrande

Hachita

Columbus

El
Paso

Dell
City

Cloverdale

Hazards

Red Flag
Warning

Sierra
Blanca



CRITICAL FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS



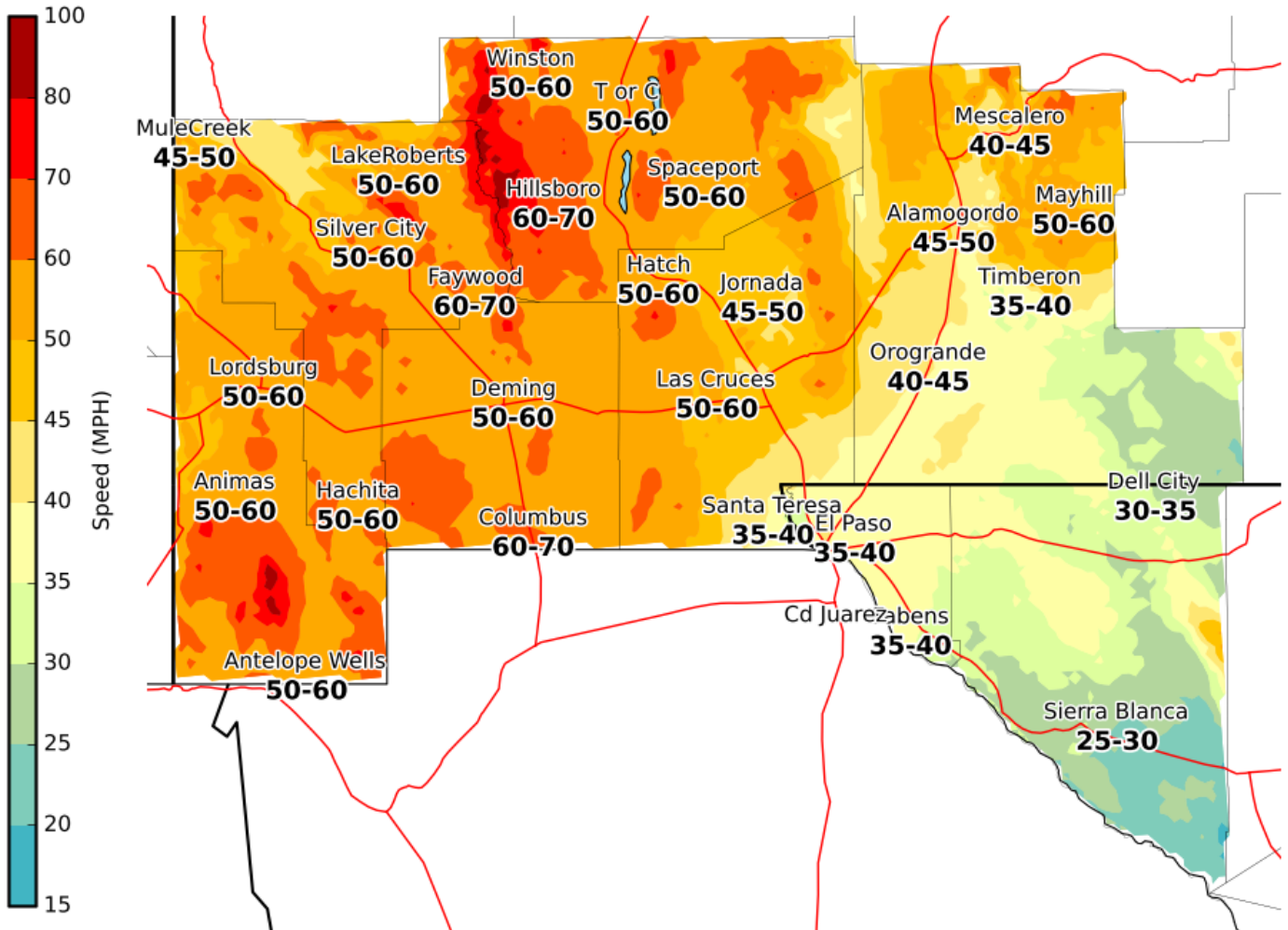
   @NWSEIPaso

weather.gov/ElPaso

Wednesday Afternoon Wind Gusts (mph)

Wind Gusts Wednesday Afternoon

Valid: 02/23/2022 03:00 PM - 02/23/2022 05:00 PM MST



National Weather Service
El Paso Texas
02/23/2022 08:23 AM MST

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