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# When is a storm named?

*There isn't a particular wind speed that automatically does it. Storm Austen was named on a yellow warning.*

The UK Storm Centre puts the rule in terms of what a storm might do, not what a gauge must first show. "In the UK a storm will be named when it has the potential to cause disruption or damage which could result in an amber or red warning." That decision "is based on our National Severe Weather Warnings service, which is a combination of both the impact the weather may have, and the likelihood of those impacts occurring."

## There isn't a magic number

A Met Office blog, written on 20 October 2026, the day Storm Austen was named, has a sentence that stays in the head: "There isn't a particular wind speed, rainfall total or central pressure that automatically results in a storm being named." Naming is based on the potential for significant disruption and impacts. Strong winds are often the main consideration, but heavy rain and significant snowfall can also lead to a storm being named.

The Storm Centre has already said as much. "Storms will usually be named on the basis of the impacts from strong winds, but the impacts of other weather types will also be considered." Rain may count "if its impact could lead to flooding as advised by the Environment Agency, SEPA and Natural Resources Wales flood warnings, or snow."

## Why Austen was named on yellow

Storm Austen was named by the Met Office on 20 October 2026, with a date of impact of 23 October. On the day it was named, a yellow warning for wind was in force for southern England and south Wales — not an amber or a red. The official blog explains why that can happen. A yellow warning may mean some disruption is likely, or that much more significant impacts are possible but confidence is still building. A storm may be named while only yellow warnings are in force if there is potential for disruptive impacts. As confidence increases, the warnings may be updated.

Deputy Chief Forecaster Tom Crabtree said: "While the exact track and position of Storm Austen is still being determined, what's clear is that we have an impactful period of weather on the way and the potential for disruption in places, which has resulted in the system being named."

## Who can name it

Name our Storms first launched in 2015. When the criteria are met, either the Met Office, Met Éireann or KNMI can name a storm, taking the next name from the latest list in alphabetical order. A new list is published each September, and runs from early September to late August the following year.

### A short quiz

1. Is there a wind speed that automatically names a storm?
2. What kind of warning was in force when Storm Austen was named?
3. In which year did Name our Storms first launch?

**Answers, face down until you want them.** 1. No — there isn't a particular wind speed, rainfall total or central pressure that automatically does it. 2. A yellow warning for wind. 3. 2015.

Sources, checked 17 November 2026: the UK Storm Centre (weather.metoffice.gov.uk/warnings-and-advice/uk-storm-centre) and the Met Office blog "What does it take for a storm to be named?" (20 October 2026). This typographic sheet has no photographs. named.storms.im is independent of the official services. Live warnings belong on the Met Office.
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