

Frequently Asked Questions about CoCoRaHS Condition Monitoring

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1) What is condition monitoring?

- Condition monitoring is the regular recording of weather and its impacts on people, plants, and animals. In addition to daily precipitation measurements, observers submit short descriptions of how the amount of precipitation they have, or have not, received has affected their local environment and community.

2) Why have we changed from drought impacts reporting to condition monitoring?

- It is helpful to monitor conditions regularly whether it is wet or dry. Condition monitoring includes all impacts not just impacts from droughts. This can help us identify indicators of and recovery from drought.

3) How do I submit a 'condition monitoring' report?

- The CoCoRaHS [website](#) provides a step-by-step guide for submitting your report. Here is a link to the [guide](#). The instructions are on pages 21-46 in the guide.

4) How has the reporting form changed from the previous drought impact report?

- Report date: Previously the report form included a start date and end date. In order to simplify reporting and improve consistency we have replaced the start/end date fields with a "Report Date" field. Enter the date you submit your report here.
- Condition scale bar: The condition scale bar has been added to provide a standardized form of condition reporting. You can select from one of the 7 levels representing a range of dry, wet, or normal conditions. Here is a link to the condition monitoring [guide](#) that has more information on what each condition looks like.
- General awareness category: The "General Awareness" option provides a box to check when conditions may not have changed or if the other report levels are not appropriate for the content of your report. Reporting no change is equally as important as reporting zeros on days when you do not receive any precipitation.

Please report “No change” in the description, as well as check the “General Awareness” box, if you do not have any updates to report on the conditions in your area.

- Deleted: The condition monitoring checkbox will no longer be necessary and has been removed from the data entry form. Everyone using the CoCoRaHS data entry form will be entering condition monitoring reports.
- Deleted: Due to a lack of reporting and some confusion about what values to enter, the economic value boxes were removed from the data entry form.

5) How do I know what to check on the condition scale bar?

- Guidance is available through a link on the report form.

Severely Dry	Moderately Dry	Mildly Dry	Near Normal	Mildly Wet	Moderately Wet	Severely Wet
<input type="radio"/>						

- Here is a link to the condition monitoring [guide](#) with specific guidance on pages 6 to 16.

6) How often should I submit reports?

- Once a week is ideal. Reporting on Saturday or Sunday will allow report users such as [US Drought Monitor](#) (USDM) authors to view updated information before they update the USDM map each week. Some observers report once/2 weeks to once/month which is also fine.
- It is most important to try to report consistently over time.

7) What if I don't have time to submit a full condition monitoring report? Can I just mark conditions on the scale bar?

- While you might not have time to write a full condition monitoring report every week, even short reports can provide valuable information. If conditions are stable, a report of “no notable change in overall conditions this week” is useful information, just as reporting “0” in your daily precipitation is an important data point. If you would like your report to appear on the national Drought Impact Reporter, be sure to select one or more of the report categories.

8) How do I know what to write in a condition monitoring report?

- Try to report on **current** conditions in the local area(s) near your station. This could include conditions at your home, neighborhood, or the community or county in which you live.
- Try to report on **how conditions may have changed** based on the amount of precipitation you have, or have not, received. You might also include information about how conditions are compared to past years or months.
- There is no right or wrong answer for what you are reporting, so give it your best try.
- Guidance is available through a link on the report.

Condition Scale Bar		More information on the scale bar	Clear Scale Bar			
Severely Dry	Moderately Dry	Mildly Dry	Near Normal	Mildly Wet	Moderately Wet	Severely Wet
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Here is a link to the condition monitoring [guide](#) with specific guidance on what to write in a condition monitoring report.

9) What report categories should I check?

- The report categories you check at the bottom of the condition monitoring report form should correspond to the information you provide in your description of conditions. For suggestions on the types of things you might observe in the different categories, check out the link to “*More information on condition monitoring categories*” found on the report form.

Report Categories
Please check at least one report category. If you check a category, please provide supporting information in the description. More information on condition monitoring categories.
<input type="checkbox"/> General Awareness
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> Business And Industry
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire
<input type="checkbox"/> Plants And Wildlife
<input type="checkbox"/> Relief Response
<input type="checkbox"/> Society And Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism And Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Supply And Quality

10) Who uses condition monitoring reports?

- The reports are used by many entities interested in climate and landscape conditions.
- A few of the current users are:
 - The Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments ([CISA](#)) program
 - The Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments ([RISA](#)) program
 - The American Association of State Climatologists ([AASC](#))
 - The National Integrated Drought Information System ([NIDIS](#))
 - The National Drought Mitigation Center Drought Impact Reporter ([NDMC DIR](#))
 - US Drought Monitor ([USDM](#)) map authors

11) How do the people who read my reports know what normal conditions are for my area?

- Many of the people who read condition monitoring reports are familiar with the different geographies and local climate conditions we have in the Carolinas, such as agency representatives on the drought planning and response committees and those working in our state climate offices. However, any information you can provide about how current conditions might be different from what you would consider to be normal for that time of year is also helpful information to include in your report. For instance, you might share information on whether you have received above or below normal rainfall amounts for the year or if seasonal changes such as leaves turning or different plants blooming are early or delayed.

12) Is there a 'best' day or time to report?

- Yes, we request that weekly reports be submitted on Saturday or Sunday for consideration in weekly drought assessments and monitoring discussions, prior to the publication of the [US Drought Monitor](#) on Thursdays.
- Here is a link to the condition monitoring [guide](#), with specific guidance on when to report on pages 19 and 20.

13) What happened to my previous reports?

- Your reports are still available in the CoCoRaHS archives, now listed as 'condition monitoring' reports. They are also available through the National Drought Mitigation Center Drought Impact Reporter.

14) How can I access and view my new condition monitoring reports?

- On the web map
 - Reports are shown by location on the web map created by CISA. It is possible to see past reports on the web map by scrolling along the bottom time bar of the map. Currently, the web map is only available for South Carolina and North Carolina.
 - Here is the link to the web map <http://www.cisa.sc.edu/map/>
- On the CoCoRaHS page
 - From the [CoCoRaHS home page](#), click on “View Data” in the menu bar at the top of the screen. Then click on “Condition Monitoring Reports” in the list.
- NDMC Drought Impact Reporter
 - Condition monitoring reports also go to the [National Drought Impact Reporter](#). To view only CoCoRaHS reports, use the “Report Types” filter in the right column of search options.

15) Can I submit photos?

- Currently, there is not an option to submit photos through the CoCoRaHS website. However, you can submit photos through the national Drought Impact Reporter. Click on “[Submit a Report](#)”. The option to submit images is about 2/3 down the page. Please include your CoCoRaHS station number in the description of your photo. This will help the moderators of the NDIR to associate the photo with condition monitoring reports you have submitted through the CoCoRaHS website.

16) Do you share observer contact information with anyone?

- No, if you participate in the project with the CISA team, we will only use your contact information to send information to you electronically (e.g., newsletters, information about observer conference calls, links to online surveys). We DO NOT share your contact information in any way nor is it posted to the web map. Your CoCoRaHS station number is the only publicly available identification information.