Types of Weather Fronts

When large masses of warm air and cold air meet, they do not mix. Instead, they form a front, usually hundreds of miles long. When a front passes, the weather changes. The chart describes the four main types of fronts and the weather changes each type brings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Front</th>
<th>How It Forms</th>
<th>Weather It Brings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold front</td>
<td>Forms when a cold air mass pushes under a warm air mass, forcing the warm air to rise.</td>
<td>Thunderheads can form as the moisture in the warm air mass rises, cools, and condenses. As the front moves through, cool, fair weather is likely to follow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warm front</td>
<td>Forms when a moist, warm air mass slides up and over a cold air mass.</td>
<td>As the warm air mass rises, it condenses into a broad area of clouds. A warm front brings gentle rain or light snow, followed by warmer, milder weather.</td>
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<td>Stationary front</td>
<td>Forms when warm and cold air meet and neither air mass has the force to move the other. They remain stationary, or “standing still.”</td>
<td>Where the warm and cold air meet, clouds and fog form, and it may rain or snow. Can bring many days of clouds and precipitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occluded Front</td>
<td>Forms when a warm air mass gets caught between two cold air masses. The warm air mass rises as the cool air masses push and meet in the middle.</td>
<td>The temperature drops as the warm air mass is occluded, or “cut off,” from the ground and pushed upward. Can bring strong winds and heavy precipitation.</td>
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