

SOME BASICS OF A SURFACE (ground level) WEATHER MAP...

Cold Front: (Front of Cold Air Mass) Blue Line on weather maps

- Leading Edge of Colder Air.... Usually drier airmass that eventually clears the skies of clouds & precipitation. However, can initiate thunderstorm development if it interacts with a warm & humid airmass
- Winds switch to the northwest or northeast.
- Temperatures can fall slowly or dramatically, depending on how strong the front is.
- A period of cloudiness may exist for a while if front is weak.

Warm Front: (Front of Warm Air Mass) Red Line on weather maps

- Leading Edge of Warmer Air... Usually moister airmass that eventually leads to the lower clouds, higher relative humidity, and better chance of precipitation
- Winds switch to the southeast or southwest.
- Temperatures can rise quickly if free of clouds, but usually is less of a temperature change than a cold front.

Low Pressure: Air flows counter-clockwise (Northern Hemisphere) and converges towards the center. This converging of air, (think of cars stopping quickly behind one another and literally touching bumpers) squeezes the air together and forces it to go upwards.

As air goes upwards (or Rises) it cools, and condenses the moisture into clouds and eventually precipitation.

High Pressure: Air flows clockwise (Northern Hemisphere) and diverges from the center. This diverging of air, (think of people scattering from a lighted firecracker at a crowded outdoor concert) , also allows sinking motion to occur above the high and fosters clearing skies....but not all the time! Weak Highs still allow leftover clouds and fog to linger, sometimes for a few days. (i.e. - Srn Calif/Pac Nw)