



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Building a Weather-Ready Nation

Winter Weather Safety



Know Your Risk, Take Action, Be a Force of Nature

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Winter Weather Hazards

- Snow and sleet
- Blizzards
- Freezing rain
- Snow squalls
- Cold temperatures
- Strong winds
- Flooding
- Fog



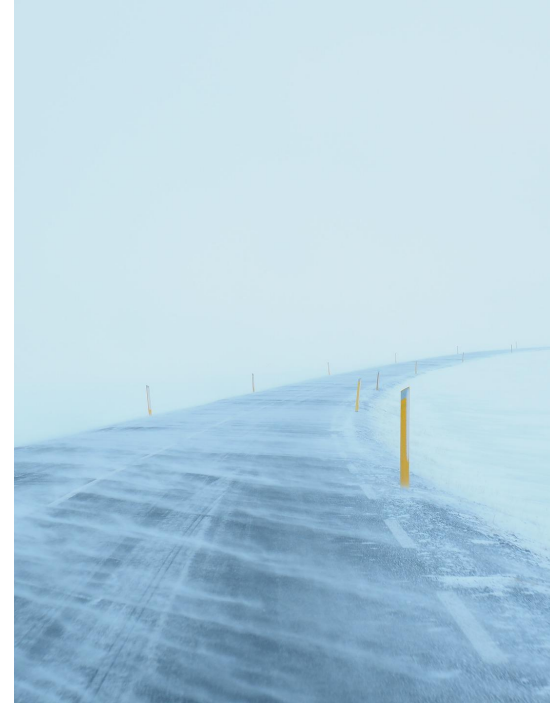
Snow and sleet

- Snow and sleet primarily affect travel, but can also damage infrastructure
- Damage from winter storms exceeds \$1 billion annually
- The NWS will issue a Winter Storm Warning, Winter Storm Watch, or Winter Weather Advisory



Blizzards

- Blizzards occur when strong winds cause blowing snow and whiteout conditions
- Do not travel during a Blizzard Warning, especially in open country
- The NWS will issue a Blizzard Warning



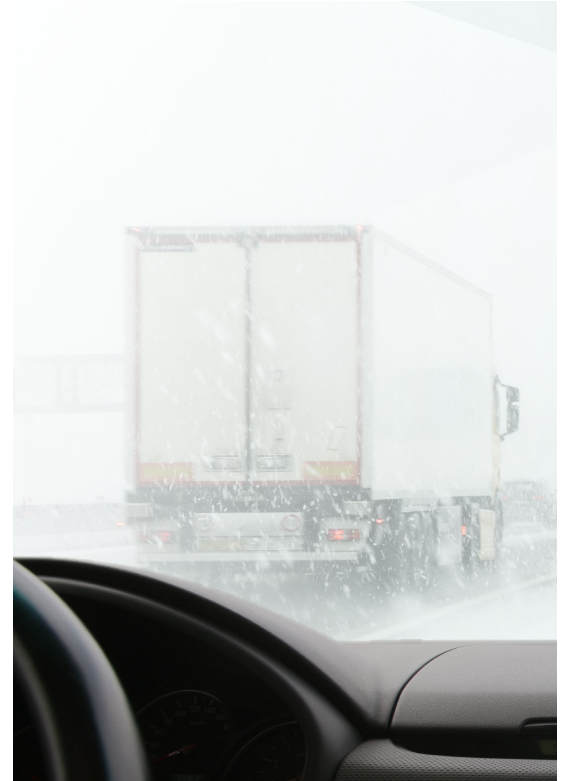
Freezing rain

- Freezing rain affects travel and can knock out power
- Have an emergency kit in case the power goes out
- The NWS will issue an Ice Storm Warning or Winter Weather Advisory



Snow squalls

- Snow squalls produce sudden white-out conditions, falling temperatures, and icy roads
- These events are usually very short-lived (30-60 minutes) and extremely intense
- The NWS will issue a Snow Squall Warning



NWS Winter Storm Products

WINTER STORM WATCH

A Winter Storm Watch is issued when **heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain is possible.**

Be prepared to adjust travel plans in case a Warning is issued.

Be Prepared.

WINTER STORM WARNING

A Winter Storm Warning is issued when **heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain is expected.**

Travel will become dangerous. Delay or adjust travel plans until conditions improve.

Take Action!



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Cold temperatures

- Cold weather can cause frostbite and/or hypothermia
- Dress in layers, cover exposed skin, and limit time outside
- The NWS will issue a Wind Chill Warning, Wind Chill Watch, or Wind Chill Advisory



NWS Cold Weather Products

WIND CHILL WATCH

A Wind Chill Watch is issued when **very cold air and wind is possible.**

Check the forecast, and be prepared in case a Warning is issued.

Be Prepared.

WIND CHILL WARNING

A Wind Chill Warning is issued when **very cold air and wind is expected.**

Conditions could lead to frostbite or hypothermia. Limit time outside, dress in layers, and cover up exposed skin.

Take Action!



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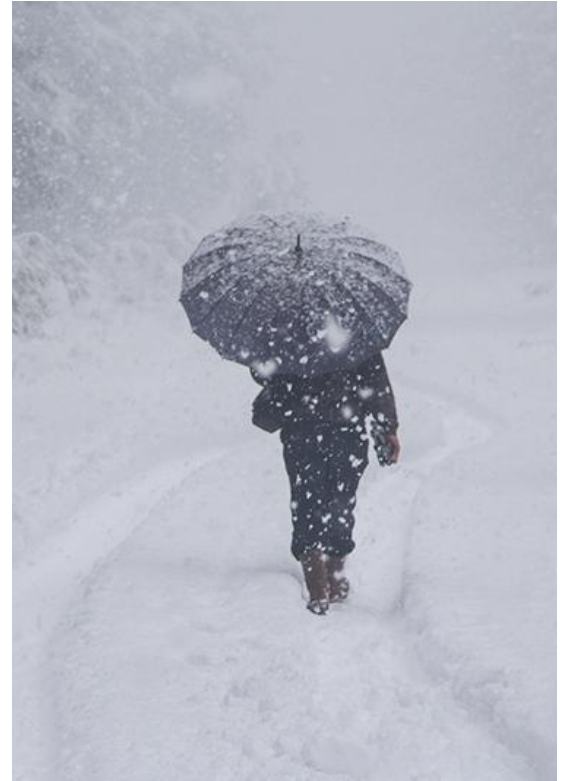


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Prepare for winter

- Check the forecast to get the latest weather
- Plan accordingly based on the expected weather conditions
- Have a winter survival kit in your car if you must travel
- Dress appropriately if you must go outside



Winter survival kit

- ***For your car***
warm clothes, blanket, food, water, cell phone, charger
- ***For your home***
food, water, medication, flashlight, first aid kit



Strong winds

- Powerful winter storms can bring strong winds that cause damage
- Strong wind makes travel difficult, especially for large vehicles
- Seek shelter in a sturdy structure during strong winds



Driving when windy

- Slow down!
- Keep two hands on the wheel
- Distance yourself from trucks, buses, and vehicles towing trailers
- Keep an eye out for debris, downed power lines, and tree branches



NWS High Wind Products

HIGH WIND WATCH

A High Wind Watch is issued when **sustained, strong winds are possible.**

Secure loose outdoor items and adjust plans if necessary so that you're not caught outside.

Be Prepared.



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HIGH WIND WARNING

A High Wind Warning is issued when **sustained, strong winds are happening or about to happen.**

Seek shelter in a sturdy structure. If driving, use caution — keep both hands on the wheel and slow down.

Take Action!



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Flooding

- Flooding can be caused by heavy rain, snow melt, or ice jams
- More than half of all flood fatalities are vehicle-related
- Never drive through floodwaters



Ice Jams

- Ice jam flooding occurs when chunks of ice build up and prevent water from flowing downstream
- This can lead to rapid rises upstream or downstream from the jam
- Never drive through floodwaters



Debris flows

- Debris flows are possible when rain falls on steep terrain or burn scars
- Soil, rocks, plants, and other objects may be swept downhill
- Never drive around barricades



NWS Flood Products

FLOOD WATCH

A Flood Watch is issued when **flooding is possible.**

Stay tuned to trusted news sources and be ready to seek higher ground.

Be Prepared.



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FLOOD WARNING

A Flood Warning is issued when **flooding is happening or about to happen.**

Move to higher ground immediately!
Never drive or walk through floodwaters.

Take Action!



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Dense fog

- Dense fog poses a threat to motorists
- Slow down, don't use cruise control
- Leave plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front of you
- Use your low-beam headlights



Winter Safety Resources

weather.gov/safety/winter

weather.gov/safety/cold

weather.gov/safety/wind

weather.gov/safety/flood

weather.gov/safety/fog



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