

Winter Weather Headlines

Watch Guidelines

WATCH TYPE	GUIDELINES FOR WATCH CRITERIA
Winter Storm Watch	Conditions are favorable for a winter storm event (heavy snow, heavy sleet, ice storm, heavy snow and blowing snow, or a combination of events) to meet or exceed Winter Storm Warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hours.
Lake Effect Snow Watch	Conditions are favorable for a lake effect snow event to meet or exceed warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hours. If wind >25 mph expected, consider Winter Storm Watch.
Blizzard Watch (<i>Rare</i>)	Conditions are favorable for a blizzard event to meet or exceed Blizzard Warning criteria in the next 12 to 48 hours.
Wind Chill Watch	Life-threatening wind chills of -35°F and below are possible in 2 nd -4 th period of the forecast.

Warning Guidelines

WARNING TYPE (Event Type)	GUIDELINES FOR WARNING CRITERIA
Winter Storm Warning (For heavy snow -or- heavy snow and blowing snow)	6 inches or more in 12 hrs (e.g., 5 to 8 inches); 8 inches or more in 24 hrs; usually with sustained winds/gusts <25 mph. Note: If warning is issued for heavy snow and blowing snow, wind should be 25-35 mph (sustained/freq gusts) with blowing snow.
Winter Storm Warning (For mixed precipitation -or- heavy snow and low wind chills)	Winter weather event having more than one predominant hazard (e.g., heavy snow and ice, etc.) meeting defined criteria for at least one of the precipitation elements.
Lake Effect Snow Warning (For heavy lake effect snow -or- heavy lake effect snow and blowing snow)	Lake-effect snow squalls which produce 6 inches or more in 12 hours or 8 inches or more in 24 hours with sustained winds and gusts <25 mph, and little, if any, other weather type expected. Note: If warning is issued for heavy snow and blowing snow, wind should be 25-35 mph (sustained/freq gusts) with blowing snow.
Winter Storm Warning (For sleet)	Sleet accumulation of greater than 3/4 inch.
Blizzard Warning (For blizzard conditions)	Sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 mph or more, and considerable falling and/or blowing snow frequently reducing visibilities to less than 1/4 mile, for 3 hours or longer.
Ice Storm Warning (For significant icing)	A significant ice accumulation (more than 1/4 inch thick) on streets, trees, buildings, wires, etc.
Winter Storm Warning (For heavy snow -or- heavy snow and blowing snow) <i>Less than warning criteria</i>	Forecaster Discretion - Consider warning for 4 to 6 inches if: * Wind/blowing snow is significant factor (sustained/freq gust 25+ mph) * Heavy snow falls in less than a forecast period (~6 hrs or less), esp. during rush hour / busy travel time.
Wind Chill Warning	Life-threatening wind chills of -35°F and below, with winds around 5 mph or greater, for more than an hour.

Winter Weather Advisory Guidelines

ADVISORY TYPE (Event Type)	GUIDELINES FOR ADVISORY CRITERIA
Winter Weather Advisory (For snow)	3 inches or more of snow in any 12 hr period (or less), usually with winds <25 mph.
Winter Weather Advisory (For snow and blowing snow)	Sustained wind or frequent gusts of 25+ mph accompanied by falling <u>and</u> blowing snow, occasionally reducing visibility to <1/2 mile for three hours or more, with little if any other weather type expected. Does not have to meet snow accum criteria, but must meet wind and visibility criteria.
Winter Weather Advisory (For mixed precipitation -or- snow and low wind chills)	Winter weather event having more than one predominant hazard (e.g., snow and ice/mix, snow and bitter wind chills, etc.) meeting defined criteria for at least one of the precipitation/weather elements.
Winter Weather Advisory (For blowing snow)	Widespread blowing snow reducing visibility <1/2 mile with winds less than 35 mph. If winds are 35+ mph, consider Blizzard Warning.
Lake Effect Snow Advisory (For lake effect snow -or- lake effect snow and blowing snow)	Lake-effect snow squalls producing 3 inches or more (w/sustained winds/frequent gusts less than 25 mph) in 12 hrs or less.
Winter Weather Advisory (For sleet)	Sleet accumulation of 1/2 to 3/4 inch in 12 hrs or less.
Freezing Rain Advisory (For light icing)	Light freezing rain or freezing drizzle with accumulation up to 1/4" in 12 hrs or less.
Winter Weather Advisory (For snow) <i>Less than advy criteria</i>	Forecaster Discretion - Consider advisory for lesser amounts if: * Early season or late season snow {mix} * Heavy snow {mix} falls in a very short time frame (few hrs) or during rush hour / busy travel time
Wind Chill Advisory	Wind chills of -20°F to -34°F, with winds around 5 mph or greater, for more than an hour.