

Public Information Statement  
National Weather Service Albany NY  
500 AM EST Fri Nov 6 2020

...Winter Weather Awareness Week Continues...

November 1 through November 7 is winter weather awareness week in New York and New England.

The following are some terms the National Weather Service uses to describe winter weather, as well as the definitions of watches, warnings and advisories issued for winter weather.

A **winter storm outlook** is issued prior to a winter storm watch. The outlook is issued when forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible 3 to 7 days in advance of a storm.

**Winter storm watches** alert the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain and or heavy sleet. Winter storm watches are usually issued 24 to 60 hours before the beginning of a winter storm. Since watches are issued so far in advance, there will be times when the storm does not materialize, or changes track, and the watches are canceled.

**Winter storm warnings** are issued when hazardous weather is imminent or has already begun. They are issued for conditions which pose a threat to life and property. The following are the warning headlines issued for winter weather events.

A winter storm warning is issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, or a combination of heavy snow, freezing rain, and or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter storm warnings are usually issued 12 to 36 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Heavy snow in eastern New York and northern New England is defined as 7 inches or more falling in a 12 hour period or 9 inches or more falling in a 24 hour period. Heavy snow in southern New England is defined as 6 inches or more falling in a 12 hour period or 8 inches or more falling in a 24 hour period. Warnings are issued when these amounts of snow and sleet are forecast.

**Snow Squall Warnings** can be issued for high-impact, localized, convective snow squalls that impact interstate travel. These are usually issued for an hour or two based on weather radar signatures. The issuance of a warning will have interstate exit information. Special weather statements may be issued for snow squalls during low traffic periods in the middle of the night.

An **ice storm warning** is issued when a heavy accumulation of one half inch or more of freezing rain is forecast.

A **blizzard warning** is issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more, and falling or blowing snow creating visibility at or below one quarter mile. These conditions are forecast to persist for at least 3 hours.

A **wind chill warning** is issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be hazardous to life within only minutes of exposure to the cold.

An advisory is issued for less serious weather conditions. Winter weather advisories are issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle and or sleet which will cause inconveniences, but if sufficient caution is exercised, do not usually threaten life and property. Specific advisories will alert you to weather that would have a significant effect on driving

conditions, outdoor activities, or public events.

The following are the advisory headlines issued for winter weather events.

**Winter weather advisories** are issued for amounts of 3 to 4 inches or more of snow and/or sleet in a 12 hour period. The National Weather Service issues winter weather advisories for *any* ice accretion including a thin film of ice from freezing drizzle.

**A wind chill advisory** is issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be a hazard to life with prolonged exposure if caution is not exercised.

For definitions of NWS Albany winter weather criteria please see:

<https://www.weather.gov/aly/preparedness>

NOAA weather radio offers one way to receive immediate relay of any winter weather warnings. Many local television and radio stations also broadcast weather alerts. For weather and hydrologic information on the go, simply go to [weather.gov/xxxxx](http://weather.gov/xxxxx) where xxxxx is your zip code.

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