

Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Albany NY
500 AM EST Tue Nov 3 2020

...Winter Weather Awareness Week Continues...

November 1 through November 7 is Winter Weather Awareness Week in New York and New England.

Heavy snow can immobilize a region or city, strand commuters, close airports, stop the flow of supplies and disrupt emergency and medical services. Accumulations of snow can cause roofs to collapse and knock down trees and power lines. Homes and farms may be isolated for days and unprotected livestock may be lost. The cost of snow removal, repairing damages, and the loss of business can have severe economic impacts.

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 are forecast and advisories are issued for lesser amounts of 3 to 4 inches or more in a 12 hour period.

The following is information on the types of snow events which impact eastern New York and western New England.

Heavy snow can be produced by nor'easters, overrunning situations and lake effect. Lesser amounts of snow are often produced by Alberta clippers.

Nor'easters are intense areas of low pressure that typically move along the eastern seaboard. They usually bring strong northeast winds as they pass by. Some memorable nor'easters in recent years include the blizzard of March 2017 and the October snowstorm of 2011. Snowfall rates in nor'easters can reach 4 to 6 inches per hour and these rates can last for several hours.

Overrunning can also produce heavy snow and this occurs when warm air aloft, flows over cold air near the surface. Overrunning occurs most often when a large dome of high pressure is located in southeastern Canada and a warm front is approaching our region from the south or southwest.

Lake effect snows often occur in the late autumn and winter downwind of the great lakes when cold arctic air sweeps across the relatively warm waters of the lakes. Snow squalls will typically form along the lee shores of the lakes and move downwind. These squalls can result in locally heavy snow with reduced visibility in fairly narrow bands. The lake effect snow which impacts eastern New York usually originates downwind of Lake Ontario. The areas of eastern New York which receive the most lake effect snow include the southern Adirondacks...Mohawk Valley and northern Catskills.

An Alberta clipper is an area of low pressure that usually forms Over the province of Alberta in Canada, east of the Rocky Mountains. Alberta clippers usually move very quickly southeast and usually bring light accumulations of snow as they cross our region. They also bring colder air from Canada in their wake.

Some snow terms which are commonly used include blizzard, blowing snow, snow squalls, snow showers and snow flurries.

A **blizzard** is a winter storm which has sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 mph or more,

with considerable falling and or blowing snow reducing the visibility to at or below one quarter mile, and these conditions last for 3 hours or more. The two greatest snowfalls on record in Albany, New York occurred during blizzards. 46.7 inches during the Blizzard of 1888 and 26.6 inches during the Blizzard of 1993.

Blowing snow is wind driven snow that reduces visibility. Blowing snow may be falling snow and or snow on the ground picked up by the wind. Blowing snow may produce icy patches on otherwise dry roads.

Snow squalls are brief intense snow showers accompanied by strong gusty winds which may produce significant snow accumulations and blinding visibility. Snow squalls sometimes result in vehicle pileups on interstate highways.

Snow showers have snow falling at varying intensities for brief periods of time with some snow accumulation.

Snow flurries are light snow which falls with little or no snow accumulation.

The National Weather Service issues frequent updates for winter weather as statements that follow up the issuance of watches, warnings or advisories.

The NWS Albany winter weather web page can be found at:
<https://www.weather.gov/aly/winter>

The National Weather Service Weather and Hazards Data Viewer can be found at:
<https://tinyurl.com/y5qlpohz>

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