Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Albany NY
800 AM EDT Wed Oct 30 2024

...Winter Weather Awareness Week Continues...

October 27 to November 2 is Winter Weather Awareness Week in New York and New England.

This message provides information on the hazards of freezing rain which is a glaze of clear ice that forms on surfaces.

Heavy accumulations of ice can bring down trees, power lines, and communication towers, and bring societal disruption for days. Small accumulations of ice can be extremely slippery for motorists and pedestrians. Bridges and overpasses are particularly dangerous because they freeze before other surfaces.

Freezing rain is the result of rain that freezes as it encounters below freezing air at or near the ground creating a film or glaze of ice. Most of eastern New York and western New England receive 20 to 30 hours of freezing rain each winter.

The National Weather Service issues ice storm warnings for ice accumulations of half an inch or more and winter weather advisories for any ice accretion including a thin film of ice from freezing drizzle.

A catastrophic, widespread ice storm affected much of eastern New York and New England December 11 and 12, 2008 with up to 1.8 million people without power. Ice accumulation on trees and power lines was up to one inch. Other widespread damaging ice storms affected the Albany forecast area in February 1909, December 1929, December 1942, December 1948, January 1956 and December 1964.

Localized ice storms over small geographic areas occur more frequently. A localized ice storm impacted the Capital Region of NY on March 22-23, 2024 with power outages lasting days in some areas. A significant ice storm struck Ulster County in eastern New York on February 3-4, 2022. The storm paralyzed part of the county for many days due to widespread downed trees and power lines.

Sleet is a form of precipitation consisting of clear ice pellets, often mixed with rain, freezing rain and or snow.

Black ice is a thin film of ice on roads or sidewalks which is difficult to see or looks wet, but is actually very slippery and dangerous to drive and walk on. Black ice forms at night when radiational cooling refreezes water on roads or sidewalks, and can form when air temperatures are above freezing if skies clear and the ground is cold or frozen.

Your Albany National Weather Service forecast office is available online at www.weather.gov/albany. The Red Cross, FEMA, state and local emergency management agencies and TV stations have apps that will alert you of threatening weather by relaying National Weather Service warnings.

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