



# NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Building a Weather-Ready Nation

# Winter Weather Safety



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

[weather.gov/safety](https://weather.gov/safety)

# Winter Weather Hazards

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



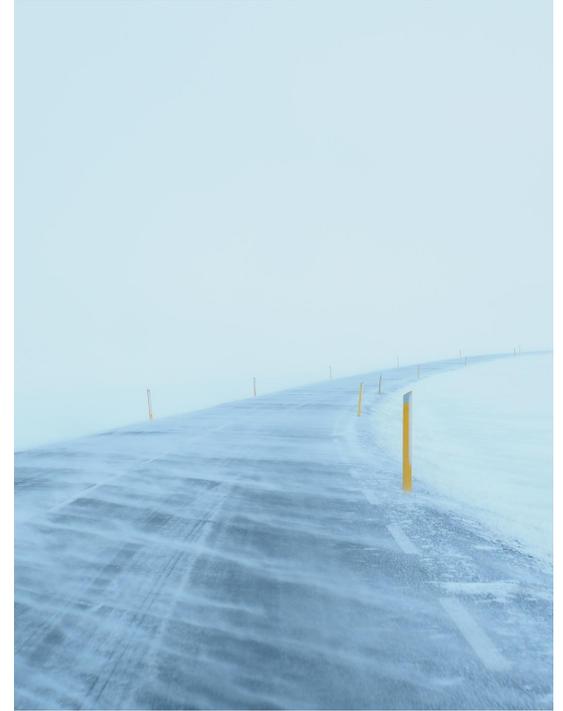
# Snow and sleet

- 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



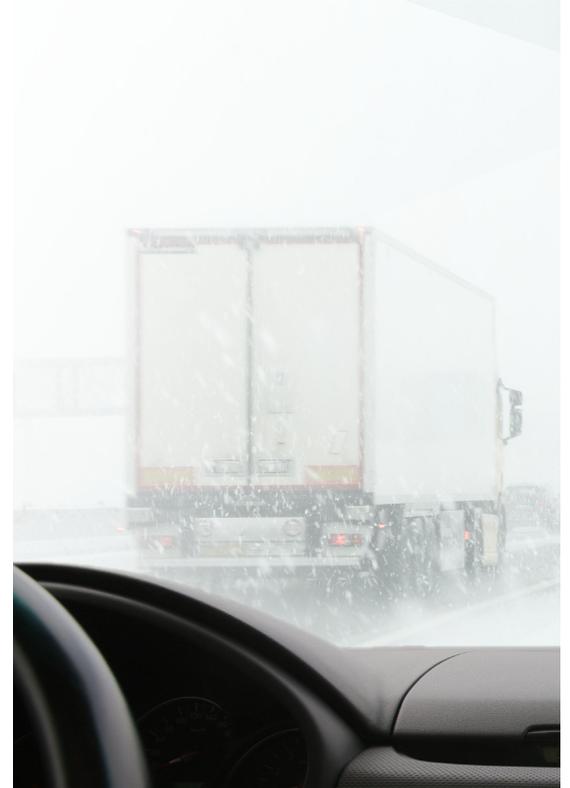
# Freezing rain

- 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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# 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, flash light, 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

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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.

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**Be Prepared.**



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## HIGH WIND WARNING

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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.

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**Take Action!**

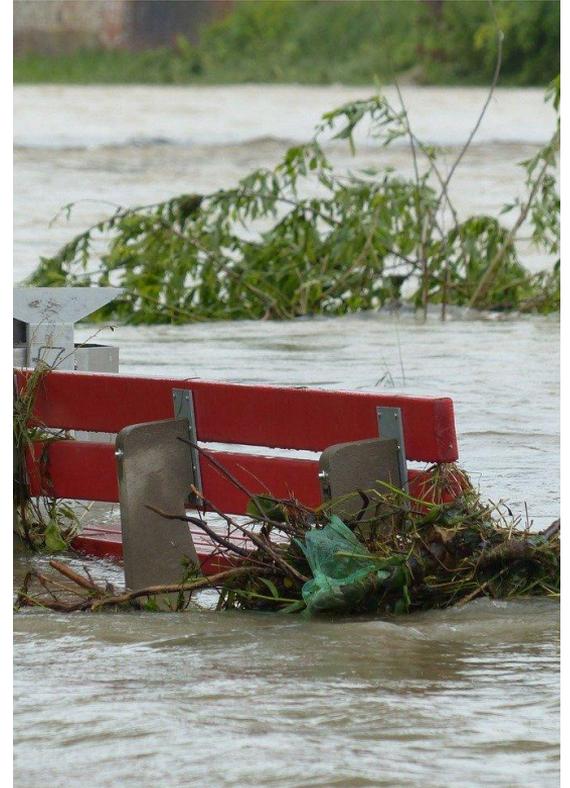


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# Flooding

- 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](https://weather.gov/safety/winter)

[weather.gov/safety/cold](https://weather.gov/safety/cold)

[weather.gov/safety/wind](https://weather.gov/safety/wind)

[weather.gov/safety/flood](https://weather.gov/safety/flood)

[weather.gov/safety/fog](https://weather.gov/safety/fog)



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