

Winter Severe/Hazardous Weather Terms



Winter Storm Outlook

Issued prior to an official Winter Storm Watch. The outlook is given when forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible. This is usually issued 48-72 hours in advance of a winter storm.

Winter Storm Watch

Alerts the public to the potential for blizzard conditions, heavy snow, significant icing or a combination of these events. Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours in advance of a winter storm.

Winter Storm Warning

Issued when a combination of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or freezing sleet is expected to occur. Winter storm warnings are usually issued six to 24 hours before the event is expected to occur.

- **Heavy Snow** – Around six inches of snow in 12 hours or less across northern Ohio, and four to five inches in 12 hours across central and southern Ohio; or around eight inches or more of snow in 24 hours or less across northern Ohio and six inches or more of snow in 24 hours across southern Ohio.
- **Significant Icing** – Usually, an ice accumulation of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or more from freezing rain, an accumulation of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or more of sleet, or a combination of freezing rain and sleet.

Blizzard Warning

Issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more and falling or blowing snow creating visibilities below $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. These conditions should persist for at least three hours.

Lake Effect Snow Warning

Issued for the snow belt of northeast Ohio when lake effect snow is expected to accumulate to six inches or more in 12 hours or less, or eight inches of snow in 24 hours or less.

Winter Weather Advisories

Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle and sleet that will cause significant inconvenience and moderately dangerous conditions.

- **For snow** – Three to five inches in 12 hours or less will trigger an advisory for northern Ohio, while two to three inches of snow will trigger an advisory in central and southern Ohio.
- **For freezing rain, freezing drizzle** – Any accretion or accumulation up to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
- **For blowing and drifting snow** – When blowing snow will restrict visibility to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less and cause significant drifting snow.

Lake Effect Snow Advisory

Issued when four to five inches of snow is expected to fall over the snow belt of northeast Ohio in 12 hours or less.

Dense Fog Advisory

Issued when widespread fog will reduce visibility to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less.

Wind Chill Temperature

It is the temperature it "feels like" outside and is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, the body is cooled at a faster rate causing skin temperature to drop. Wind Chill does not impact inanimate objects like car radiators and exposed water pipes, because these objects cannot cool below the actual air temperature.

Wind Chill Advisory

Issued when severe wind chill temperatures are expected.

