

## Winter Weather Terminology

Watch is issued when the risk of a hazardous winter weather event has increased, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain.

Warning or Advisory is issued when a hazardous winter weather event is occurring, is imminent, or has a high probability of occurrence. A warning is used when there is a threat to life or property. An advisory is for less serious conditions that cause inconvenience, and, if caution is not used, could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.

Snow criteria for a warning is 6 inches or more in 12 hours or less, OR, 8 inches or more in 24 hours or less. Snow criteria for an advisory is 3 to 5 inches.

Winter Storm Warnings and Winter Weather Advisories may be issued for a combination of elements like snow coupled with wind and blowing snow, or snow coupled with sleet and freezing rain.

Sleet is pellets of ice. Sleet bounces when it hits the ground.

Freezing Rain is rain that freezes when it hits the ground or objects on the ground. It forms a sheet or glaze of ice.

Ice Storm is used to describe occasions when the ice from freezing rain is significant enough (1/4 inch thick or more) to cause damage.

Blizzard is a storm with winds of 35 mph or higher AND visibility frequently below 1/4 mile in snow and/or blowing snow AND these conditions last three (3) hours or longer. There is no set temperature requirement for a blizzard.

Wind Chill is that part of the cooling of a human body caused by moving air. Moving air accelerates the rate of heat transfer away from a human body.

Wind Chill Advisory is issued for wind chills of 25 to 39 below zero with a wind speed of at least 5 mph.

Wind Chill Warning is issued for wind chills of 40 below zero and colder with a wind speed of at least 5 mph.