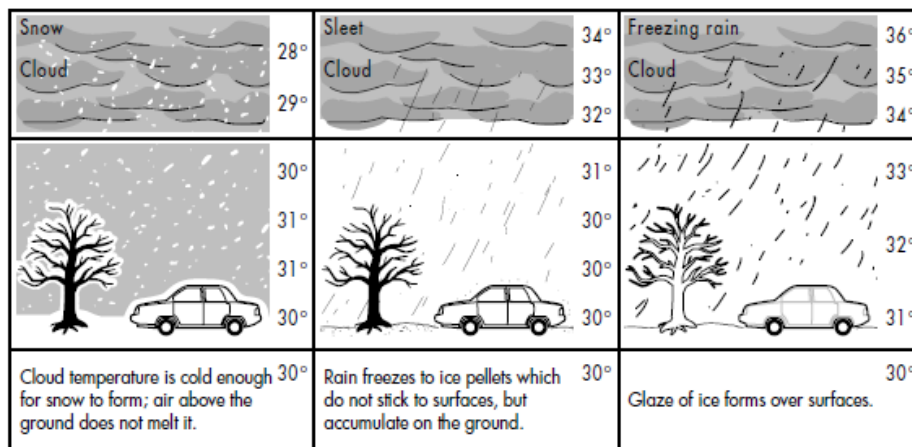


What are Winter Storms?

A *blizzard* is the most dangerous of all winter storms. It combines low temperatures, heavy snowfall, and high winds that blow the snow into drifts and reduce visibility to only a few yards. Blizzards have sustained winds of at least 35 mph that last for at least 3 hours. The winds create a considerable chill factor.

A *heavy snowstorm* is one that drops 4 or more inches of snow in a 12-hour period or 6 or more inches in a 24-hour period. High winds may accompany the storm, resulting in snowdrifts and causing poor visibility.

An *ice storm* occurs when moisture falls from clouds and freezes immediately on impact (freezing rain). This type of storm makes driving and even walking extremely hazardous. Ice storms can paralyze a community within an hour of starting. Freezing rain occurs when the ground temperature is below freezing and the rain is from upper air that is warmer.



Types of winter precipitation. **A**, Snow. **B**, Sleet. **C**, Freezing rain.

National Weather Service Definitions

The National Weather Service issues watches and warnings for hazardous winter weather. The following terms are used:

Winter storm watch: Severe winter weather may affect your area.

Winter storm warning: Severe winter weather conditions are expected.

Ice storm warning: Significant, possibly damaging, ice accumulation is expected.

Heavy snow warning: A snowfall of at least 4 inches in 12 hours or 6 inches in 24 hours is expected.

Blizzard warning: Large amounts of falling or blowing snow and winds of at least 35 mph are expected for several hours. *Severe blizzard warning:* Considerable falling or blowing snow, winds of at least 45 mph, and temperatures of 10° F (12° C) or lower are expected to last several hours.

High wind warning: Winds of at least 40 mph are expected to last at least 1 hour.

Traveler's advisory: Ice and snow are expected to hinder travel, but the anticipated weather conditions are not serious enough to require warnings.