



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://www.weather.gov/safety)

Winter Weather Hazards

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



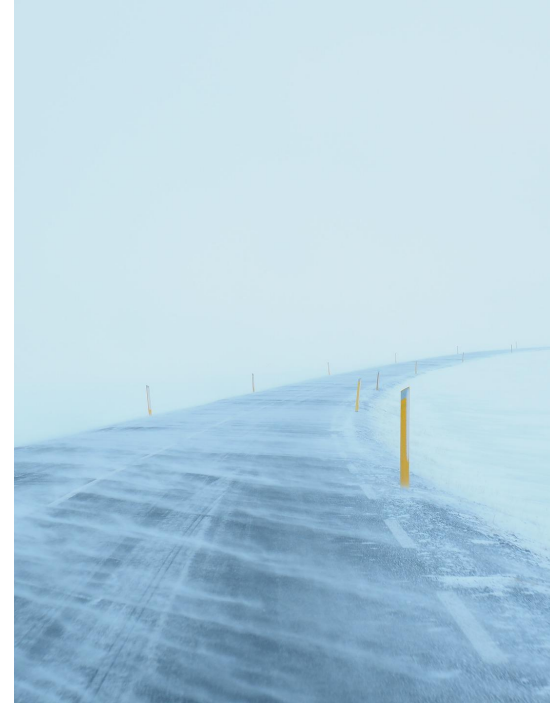
Snow and sleet

- 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 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



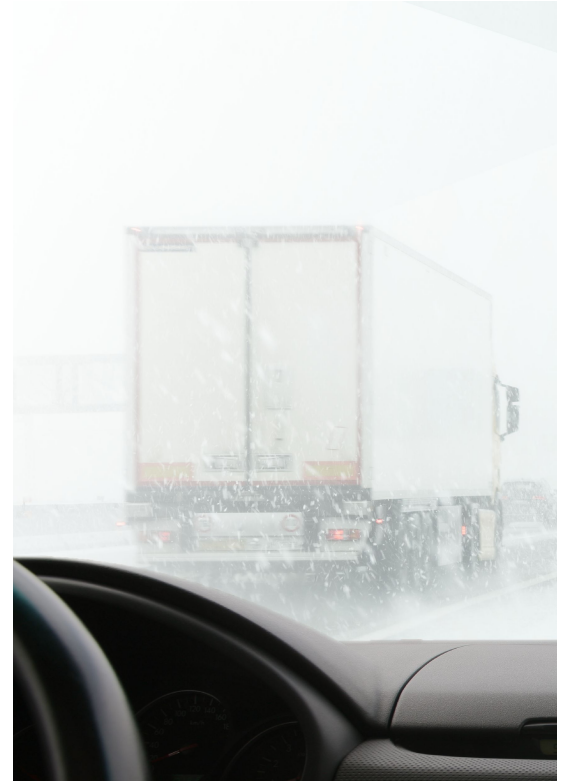
Freezing rain

- 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

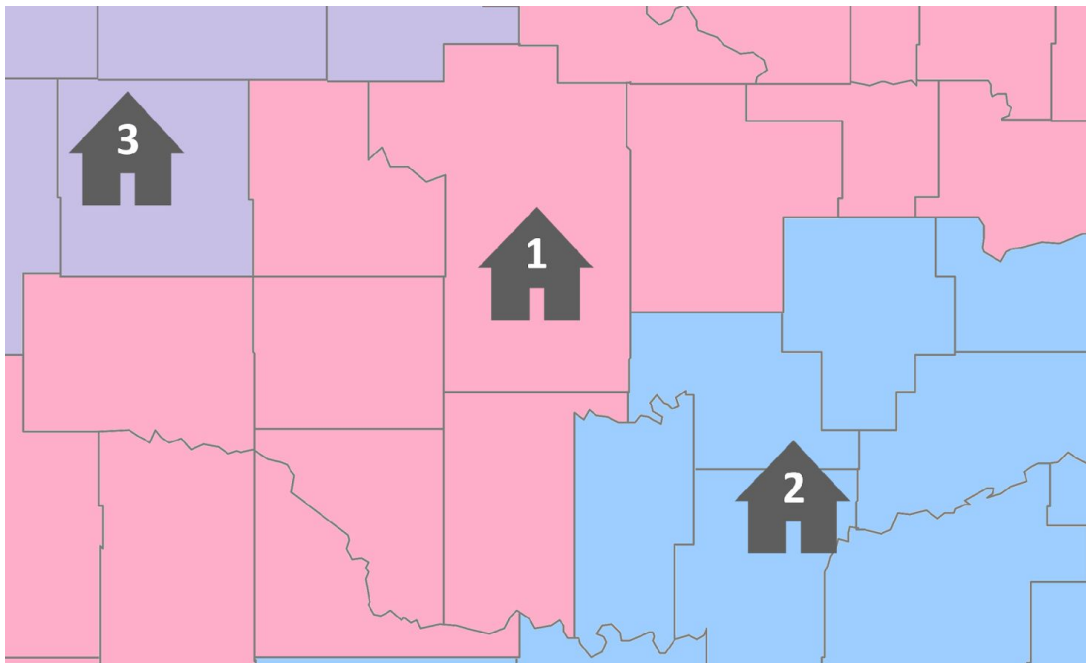


Snow squalls

- 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 Products



Winter Storm Warning

Snow, sleet, or ice expected! Take Action!
Confidence is high that a winter storm will produce heavy snow, sleet or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

Winter Storm Watch

Snow, sleet, or ice possible! Be prepared.
Confidence is medium that a winter storm could produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

Winter Weather Advisory

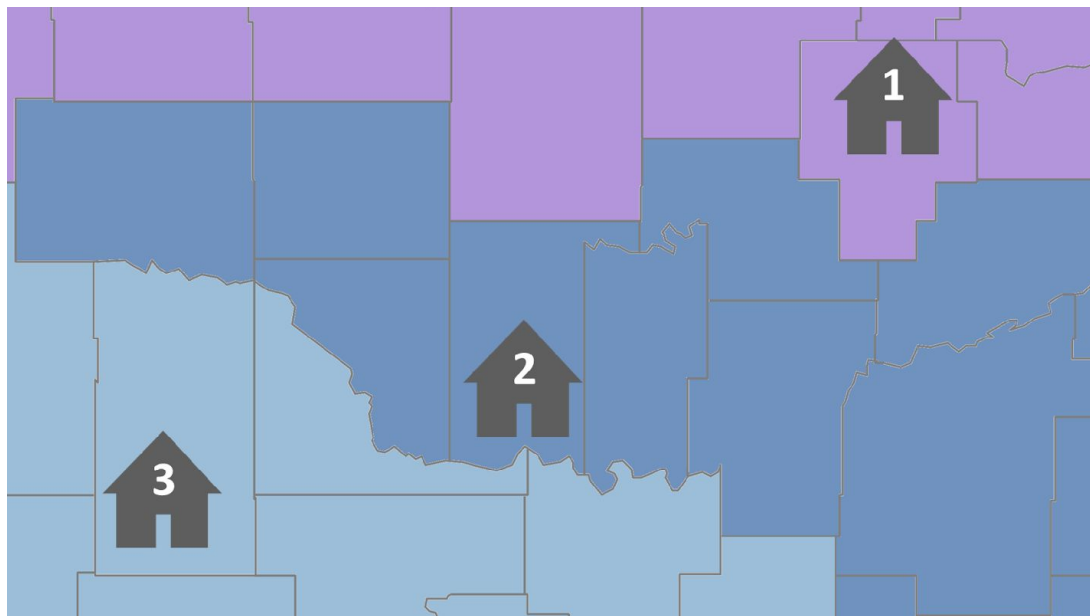
Wintry weather expected. Exercise caution.
Light amounts of wintry precipitation or patchy blowing snow will cause slick conditions and could affect travel if precautions are not taken.

Cold temperatures

- Cold weather can cause frostbite or hypothermia
- Dress in layers, cover exposed skin, and limit time outside
- The NWS will issue a Wind Chill Warning or Wind Chill Advisory



NWS Cold Weather Products



1 Wind Chill Warning

Dangerous cold expected! Plan ahead. Confidence is high that very cold air and strong wind could lead to frostbite or hypothermia in a matter of minutes. Limit time outside, dress in layers, and cover up exposed skin.

2 Wind Chill Watch

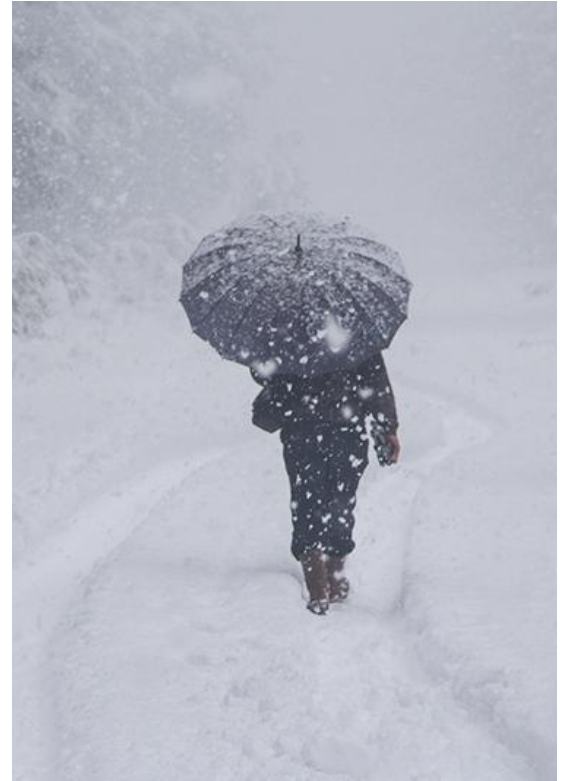
Dangerous cold possible. Be prepared. Confidence is medium for very cold air and strong wind. Check the forecast, and make sure your loved ones are prepared if dangerous cold weather does occur.

3 Wind Chill Advisory

Cold weather expected. Exercise Caution. Cold and breezy conditions could cause frostbite or hypothermia if precautions are not taken. Dress in layers and cover up exposed skin.

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

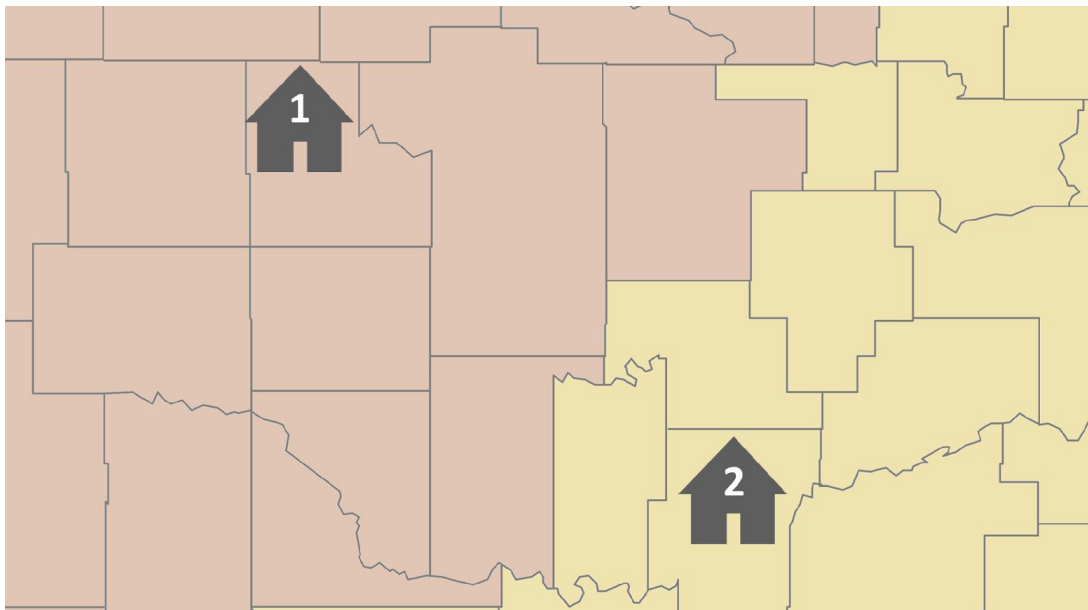


Driving when windy

- 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 Warning

Strong wind expected! Plan ahead. Confidence is high that gusty winds will make travel difficult, especially for large vehicles. Damage to trees, powerlines, and buildings is also possible. Take cover in a sturdy structure and avoid travel.

High Wind Watch

Strong wind possible. Be Prepared. Confidence is medium that gusty winds will develop. If they do develop it could make travel difficult and cause damage. Check the forecast, and make you're prepared if strong winds do occur.

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

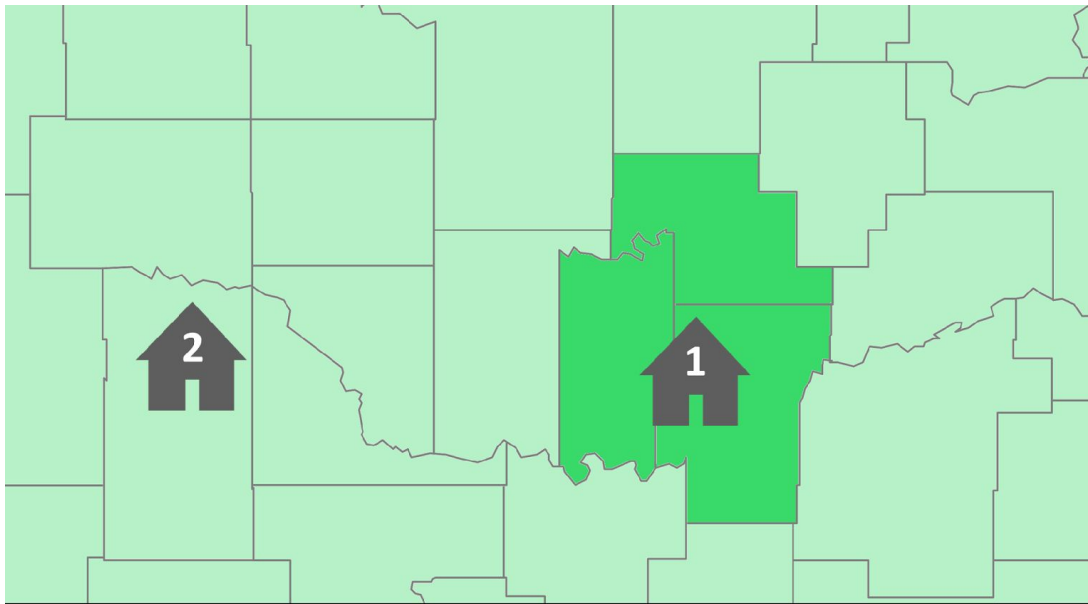


Debris flows

- 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 Warning

Flooding expected! Take Action. Confidence is high that flooding which poses a significant threat to life and property is occurring or will shortly. Seek higher ground if you are in a flood-prone area. Never drive through flood waters!

Flood Watch

Flooding possible. Be Prepared. Confidence is medium that flooding may develop. Find out if you are in a flood-prone area. Check the forecast and be ready to take action if a flood warning is issued.

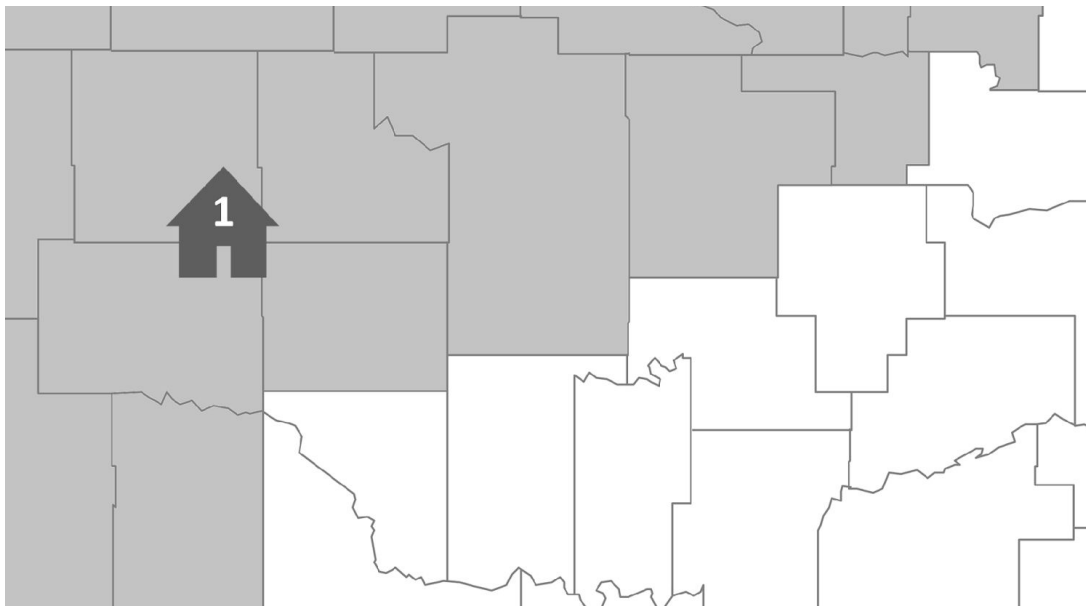


Dense fog

- Dense fog poses a threat to motorists
- Slow down
- Leave plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front of you
- Use your low-beam headlights



NWS Fog Products



Dense Fog Advisory

Dense fog expected! Exercise caution. Areas of dense fog will reduce visibility and pose a threat to motorists. Allow extra time for travel, drive slowly, and use your low-beam headlights.

Winter Safety Resources

weather.gov/safety/winter

weather.gov/safety/cold

weather.gov/safety/wind

weather.gov/safety/flood

weather.gov/safety/fog



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

weather.gov/safety