

Relative Comparison of Winter Weather Impacts – *National Weather Service Fort Worth, TX*

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|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| ¼" of freezing rain | <u>is same as</u> | ½" sleet | <u>is same as</u> | 3" Snow |
| ¼" - ½" of freezing rain | <u>is same as</u> | 1" to 2" sleet | <u>is same as</u> | 4" to 6" Snow |
| ½"+ of freezing rain | <u>is same as</u> | 2"+ sleet | <u>is same as</u> | 6"+ Snow |

Definitions

Heavy Snow - Snowfall which accumulates to a depth of at least 4 inches in 12 hours or 6 inches in 24 hours.

Sleet - Pellets of completely frozen ice.

Freezing Rain/Freezing Drizzle - Rain or drizzle which falls as liquid then freezes when it strikes the ground or other surface.



A complicating factor is wind speed:

5 mph or less:

■ Winter Impacts remain mostly due to the accumulations

5 to 15 mph:

■ Winter impacts are increased, as the wind speeds will cause trees and power lines to break faster than from accumulations alone.

15 – 20 mph +:

■ Winter impacts are further increased. Power outages much higher than they would be from accumulations alone. Travel restricted further due to low visibility and drifting.

Air Temperature is a major factor in the severity and duration of winter weather impacts:

32 Degrees or Higher:

■ Low end of Impacts: Much higher melting rate for snow. Mixture of rain and sleet likely instead of freezing rain

29 to 31 Degrees:

■ Medium Impacts: Bridges begin to freeze around 29 degrees. Roads begin to freeze at 27

28 Degrees or Lower:

■ Highest Impacts: Any rain will immediately freeze on exposed surfaces. The duration of 27 degrees or colder will then determine when the event's impacts will finally end.

Ice (Freezing Rain)

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <1/4" | Windshields coated Icy bridges and overpasses Tree limbs sag or break Spotty power outages |
| 1/4" - 1/2" | Larger coating of ice on windshields Most roads icy Large tree limbs sag and/or break Significant power outages |
| 1/2" + | Roads impassable Tree damage Power lines or poles damaged Widespread or complete power outages |

Snow

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1" - 3" | Slow traffic. Usually a thin sheet of ice develops on roads under the snow from snow compression, Bridges and overpasses slick. |
| 3" - 5" | Slower traffic. Overpasses slick, and most primary roads have slick spots. Secondary roads quite slick. |
| 5" + | All roads become slick and traffic slows more. If snow is dense, can cause tree limbs and power lines to sag. Spotty power outages. |

Sleet (Ice Pellets)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1/2" | Windshields covered Slick bridges and overpasses |
| 1/2" - 1" | Larger covering of ice on windshields Most roads slick and hazardous |
| 1" + | Roads impassable Icy ruts in roadways Tree limbs sag and or break Spotty power outages |

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/?n=winterwx> – generic North Texas winter information
http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20141016_winteroutlook.html - 2014 Winter Outlook

