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

$\frac{1}{4}$” of freezing rain is same as $\frac{1}{2}$” sleet is same as 3” Snow

$\frac{1}{4}$” - $\frac{1}{2}$” of freezing rain is same as 1” to 2” sleet is same as 4” to 6” Snow

$\frac{1}{2}$”+ of freezing rain is same as 2”+ sleet is same as 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thickness</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| <¼”       | Windshields coated  
Icy bridges and overpasses  
Tree limbs sag or break  
Spotty power outages |
| ¼” - ½”   | Larger coating of ice on windshields  
Most roads icy  
Large tree limbs sag and/or break  
Significant power outages |
| ½” +      | Roads impassable  
Tree damage  
Power lines or poles damaged  
Widespread or complete power outages |

### Sleet (Ice Pellets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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| ½”        | Windshields covered  
Slick bridges and overpasses |
| ½” – 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 |

### Snow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thickness</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1” - 3”</td>
<td>Slow traffic. Usually a thin sheet of ice develops on roads under the snow from snow compression, Bridges and overpasses slick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3” - 5”</td>
<td>Slower traffic. Overpasses slick, and most primary roads have slick spots. Secondary roads quite slick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5” +</td>
<td>All roads become slick and traffic slows more. If snow is dense, can cause tree limbs and power lines to sag. Spotty power outages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/?n=winterwx – generic North Texas winter information  