

Winter Weather Terms

Knowing winter weather terms helps you know when to put your personal preparedness plan into action. Here are three key winter weather terms to know:

- A **winter storm watch** is issued when significant winter weather (i.e. 2 inches or more of snow, ½ inch or more of sleet, ¼ inch or more of freezing rain, or a combination of these events) is possible, but not imminent. A wide range of weather events can prompt a winter storm watch so make sure to pay attention to what the watch is calling for specifically. A watch is typically issued 12 to 48 hours before the possibility of winter weather. This is the time to prepare.
- A **winter weather advisory** indicates that winter weather is imminent and may cause inconveniences; monitor media for your local impacts. A winter weather advisory is issued up to 36 hours before an event where an 80 percent or greater chance of winter precipitation (i.e. snow, freezing rain/drizzle, sleet or blowing snow) is expected to cause inconveniences, but does not meet warning criteria. This is the time to put your winter weather safety plan into action.
- A **winter storm warning** is issued when a significant winter storm (i.e., 2 inches or more of snow, ½ inch or more of sleet, ¼ inch or more of freezing rain, or a combination of these events) is imminent and is a dangerous threat to life and property. A winter storm warning can also be issued at forecaster and emergency manager discretion when significant impacts are expected but snow, sleet or freezing rain criteria is not met. These warnings are typically issued up to 36 hours before an event that has an 80 percent or greater chance of significant winter precipitation. This is the time to put your winter weather safety plan into action.

**Source: Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency - <https://gema.georgia.gov/>*