



Tercer Ejercicio. Primera Prueba. Parte A

From the Desk of the Meteorologist-in-Charge

Reporting Winter Weather to the NWS (National Weather Service)

If you are reading this newsletter you are undoubtedly interested in weather. Whether you are excited about the transition away from the heat and humidity of summer, to the snow and cold of winter, or dread its approach, you are most likely watching the weather from day to day and have a personal interest in it!

In previous newsletters, I have encouraged our readers to use their interest in weather to help the National Weather Service better fulfill its mission to protect life and property and enhance the nation's economy through timely and accurate weather forecasts and services. To help us fulfill our mission, we need you to relay critical (and sometimes life-saving) weather information to the National Weather Service in Blacksburg. We exist to serve you and to assure that our forecasts and services are as accurate, timely, and detailed as possible. We can not do this without data – the more the better!

It might be surprising that despite the fact that we have sophisticated weather satellites in geosynchronous orbit 22,300 miles above the equator looking down at the world 24/7; powerful Doppler radars; enormous computer resources to capture, process and display data; automated weather observing systems; many other impressive technological pieces of equipment; and trained scientists with many years of experience and advanced degrees; it still comes down to reports from folks such as yourself to complete the weather puzzle.

For example, all of the tools, technologies, software, and expertise in the world are meaningless if we aren't aware of a localized area of snow or ice which results in a massive pileup of cars causing injury and personal loss. The site-specific reports that you relay to us helps us fill in those critical gaps in our datasets to help us provide pinpoint accuracy. Your report may be the final piece of information needed to save countless lives!

So, how do you use your interest in weather to help us help others? First, determine whether you have a report that is significant enough to call in to the National Weather Service. Winter Weather reports that we are most interested in are the following:

- 3 inches of snow or more on the ground with snow still falling and accumulating;
- ¼ inch or more glazing of ice on tree limbs and elevated surfaces;
- A change of precipitation type (e.g., rain to snow, snow to rain, snow or rain to sleet or freezing rain, etc.).



If you observe any of the above winter weather conditions, please contact us at 866-215-4324 anytime of day or night and relay your report – the sooner the better!

In summary, the National Weather Service is not able to perform its mission apart from you. In many instances, you are our eyes and ears. You are the ones who relay important information to us, and you are the ones who are often responsible for communicating information that we disseminate to others who can make the most use of it. Without you, the information that we receive and provide has little or no impact. You, and the partnership that we share with you, make all the difference in the world! The accurate and immediate relay of time sensitive weather information, and the way that it is received and acknowledged by others, can make the difference between life and death.

This newsletter is our way of acknowledging our appreciation to you for your partnership with us. We hope that this newsletter will open doors to enhanced communication and correspondence in the future and also provide us with a way to get to know each of you better!

NOTE:

Some folks aren't quite sure about the differences between freezing rain and sleet. The following are the definitions for each weather type:

Freezing Rain - Rain which freezes on impact to form a coating of ice (glaze) upon the ground and on the objects it strikes. The coating of ice is often clear – almost like frozen clear syrup that sticks to everything that it falls on. Freezing rain can cause damage to trees, power lines, and other structures because of the accumulated weight of frozen water on existing horizontal structures which can not bear the increased load

Sleet - Also known as ice pellets, is precipitation in the form of small bits or pellets of spherical ice that rebound after striking the ground or any other hard surface. Sleet basically is a frozen raindrop, so it looks like a little ball of ice!

Freezing rain will leave a transparent glaze on highways, if the road temperatures are below freezing. Sleet from a distance may look like snow on a road, but is more granular, similar to gravel and sand.