



Snow Squall FAQ

Created by the National Weather Service



HIGHWAYS CAN BE DANGEROUS DURING A SNOW SQUALL

What is a snow squall?

- A brief but intense period of heavy snow (up to 2 inches in 30 minutes), strong winds (30+ mph), and whiteout conditions (visibility less than ¼ mile).

What are the impacts associated with snow squalls?

- Quick reductions in visibility and sudden slick conditions on roadways.
- Can cause roads to turn into a sheet of ice in just a few minutes, even if the roads only appear wet beforehand (flash freeze).
- Stopping distances on an icy roadway are multiplied by x10.
- High-speed wrecks, pileups, and subsequent injuries and fatalities.



When do snow squalls occur?

- They typically occur during the daytime hours, they can occur at any time of day.
- Like summertime thunderstorms, they can happen on days with partly cloudy skies.
- They are often associated with strong cold fronts and generally last less than 1 hour.
- They are most common between November and March.

What is a snow squall warning?

- Issued for areas that will be impacted by snow squalls.
- Similar to a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning.
- Will trigger an alert on your cell phone for the most dangerous squalls.



If a snow squall warning is issued, what should I do?

- Avoid or delay motor travel until the squall passes through your location.

What if I am already driving when a snow squall warning is issued?

- Safely exit the road at the next opportunity.



What if I cannot exit the road in time and am approaching a snow squall?

- Avoid slamming on your brakes.
- Turn on your headlights and hazard lights.
- Stay in your lane.
- Increase your following distance.

What if I get caught in a pileup because of a snow squall?

- If possible, drive slowly forward and move to the front of the pileup.
- If stopped, DO NOT stand outside your vehicle on or near the roadway.
- If you can do so safely, get as far away from the roadway as possible.
- If you cannot safely exit your vehicle, remain seated inside your vehicle



For more winter weather safety information, visit
<https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter>

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