

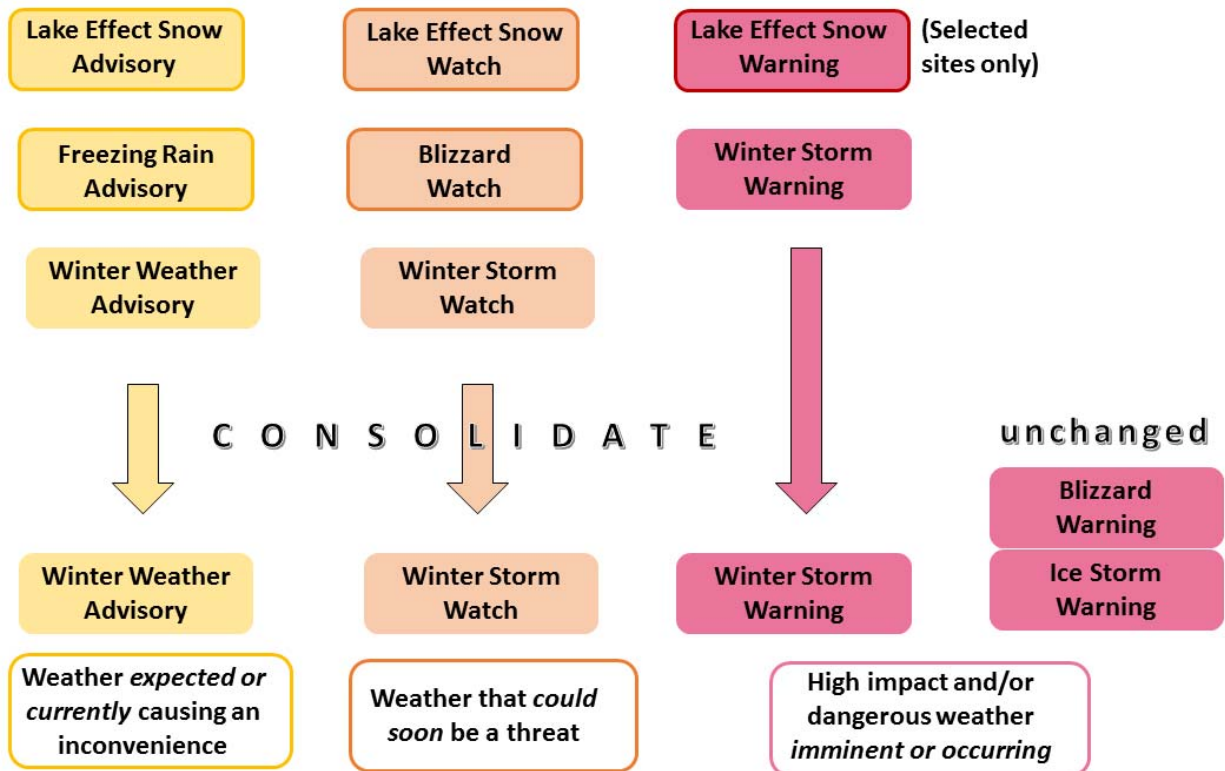


## National Weather Service Hazard Simplification Program

For decades, the National Weather Service (NWS) has used the Watch, Warning, and Advisory (WWA) system to alert users to forecast hazards. In many ways, the WWA system has been highly effective in protecting life and property. With that said, as the NWS has collected feedback during the course of the Hazard Simplification project, they learned that some users find the WWA terms confusing. In addition, users are sometimes confused about how to interpret and distinguish among the large number of individual WWA “products” (e.g., Wind Advisory, Flood Watch, Winter Storm Warning). To address this confusion, the NWS will be implementing changes to most effectively communicate hazard messages. This process will begin with winter weather products on **October 2, 2017**. This program has two components: WWA consolidation, and text product reformatting.

The first component of winter weather hazard simplification is the consolidation of some winter weather WWA products. Where previously the NWS would issue a Lake Effect Snow Advisory, or a Freezing Rain Advisory, or a Winter Weather Advisory, the conditions necessitating those advisories will now all be covered by a Winter Weather Advisory. Similarly, Lake Effect Snow Watch, Blizzard Watch, and Winter Storm Watch will be consolidated into Winter Storm Watch, and Lake Effect Snow Warning will be consolidated with Winter Storm Warning (in select locations).

Designed by B. Brown, based on NOAA/NWS, 2017





The relative urgency and threat associated with NWS Watches, Warnings, and Advisories will not change. An Advisory indicates that weather is imminent or occurring, but rather than posing a life-threatening danger, it is merely inconvenient. A Watch indicates that dangerous weather is possible soon. A Warning means that dangerous, life-threatening weather is imminent or occurring.

Of course, just because NWS will no longer issue Blizzard Watches does not mean that blizzards will not happen or that the NWS will not alert communities about them. Specific information about the winter weather hazard will be included in the text product that accompanies the watch, warning, or advisory. Text products will be reformatted into a “**What, Where, When, Additional Details, and Precautionary/Preparedness Actions**” format. Users will be able to find a description of the winter weather in the “What” section of the WWA text. Hazard Simplification does not reduce the amount of information that forecasters provide to the public – it just improves their readability and simplifies the name of the WWA product or “headline”.

Updates, social science and surveys, and background on the Hazard Simplification Project can be found at <http://weather.gov/hazardsimplification>.

## References and Additional Resources

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“Hazard Simplification is Coming Soon!” *Central Region Headquarters*, NOAA National Weather Service. Accessed 09/28/2017. <http://www.weather.gov/crh/hazsimplification>

“Hazard Simplification: A Step Forward!” *NOAA National Weather Service*. Accessed 09/28/2017. <http://www.weather.gov/media/gld/Packets/HazSimpOnePager-Partners.pdf>