



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Brian M. Satula
Administrator

Scott Walker
Governor

For more information contact:

Tod Pritchard
Office (608) 242-3324
Cell (608) 219-4008

Lori Getter
(608) 242-3239
(608) 516-0293

For Immediate Release
October 31, 2012

Are You Ready for Winter?
“Get an emergency kit in your car. It could save your life”

(MADISON) – Governor Scott Walker has declared November 5-9, 2012 as Winter Awareness Week in Wisconsin. The annual campaign, sponsored by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), its ReadyWisconsin preparedness program and NOAA’s National Weather Service (NWS), is to remind people to be prepared for winter conditions that could threaten their safety.

“The number one thing to do: make sure you have an emergency supply kit in your car – it could save your life,” says Tod Pritchard, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at Wisconsin Emergency Management.

ReadyWisconsin will air Television and Radio Public Service Announcements in November, urging viewers and listeners to keep an emergency kit in their vehicles. Wisconsin residents are also encouraged to sign up for a chance to win a winter survival kit on the ReadyWisconsin website: readywisconsin.wi.gov. Share your winter survival story on Facebook for another chance to win: www.facebook.com/readywisconsin.

Winter storms are considered deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. For example, in the last five years Wisconsin has averaged 56,000 motor vehicle crashes during winter months. An average of 55 people are killed and 6,000 injured on icy or snow-covered road.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is also a danger. According to the Centers for Disease Control, carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States, with more than 20,000 people visiting the emergency room and nearly 500 killed each year from overexposure to the gas.

Now is the time to winterize your car and home, gather items for an emergency kit in your car, and make sure you have a NOAA Weather Radio with fresh batteries. Additional winter weather tips and how to put together a winter emergency kit are available at the ReadyWisconsin website (readywisconsin.wi.gov). In addition, there are numerous winter storm maps and a history of Wisconsin’s winter weather produced by the National Weather Service.

Wisconsin Winter Facts

Groundhog Day Blizzard

It is important for all of us to prepare for the power of winter storms. Few of us will forget the Groundhog Day Blizzard of 2011.

Between January 31 and February 2, parts of the state had snowfall totals between 12 and 33 inches with wind gusts between 40 and 65 miles an hour. Schools and businesses closed and thousands heeded the warning to stay home in the near-paralyzing event.



- The coldest temperature in the winter of 2011-12 was -31 at Upson (Iron County) on Jan 20, 2012.
- Upson also had the most snow with 106.9 inches in the 2011-12 winter season, while Newton 1S in Manitowoc County had the least with only 11.0 inches. Most of the central and southern counties had only 20 to 35 inches which was well below normal.
- Wisconsin's all-time, lowest temperature is -55°F on February 2 & 4, 1996, near Couderay (Sawyer Co.). Readings of -30°F or colder have been recorded in every month from November through April. Of course, brief readings in the 50's, 60's and 70's are possible during winter as well!
- Average annual snowfall ranges from 32 to 40 inches near the Illinois border to 135 to 168 inches in the Iron County snow-belt from Gurney to Hurley. The extremes are 31.9 inches in Beloit, Rock County to 167.5 inches in Hurley, Iron County, for the period of 1981-2010.
- Greatest single storm total - Superior, 31.0 inches over Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1991.
- Greatest monthly total - Hurley, 103.5 inches in Jan. 1997.
- Greatest seasonal total - Hurley, 301.8 inches in winter of 1996-97.
- Deepest snow on ground (excluding drifts) - Hurley, 60.0 inches on Jan. 30, 1996.

Winter Driving In Wisconsin

Plan your travels and check the latest weather reports to avoid a winter storm. You can find out the latest road conditions by visiting the Wisconsin Department of Transportation travel information website at www.511wi.gov or by calling 511.

It is also important to check and winterize your vehicles before the winter season begins. Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines. Make sure your car's battery is in good shape – cold temperatures can reduce the effectiveness of a battery by 50 percent.

If expecting adverse weather during your trip, tell someone at both ends of your journey where you are going and the route you intend to take. Report your safe arrival. Make certain that both parties have your cell phone number and license plate number before you start your trip.

Be gentle with both the accelerator and brake. If the rear of your car begins to slide on snow or ice, turn into the direction of the skid. Expect a second skid as the car straightens out, and be prepared to counter this sliding action.

Carry a winter storm survival kit in the back seat of your vehicle (in case your trunk jams or is frozen shut) that includes:

- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra hats, socks and mittens
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Shovel, booster cables and windshield scraper
- Water and high-calorie non-perishable food (raisins, candy bars, energy/protein bars)
- Sand or cat litter to use for traction
- Cell phone adapter



- In the last five years Wisconsin has averaged 56,000 motor vehicle crashes during the winter months when roads are covered with ice, snow or slush.
- On average, 55 people are killed and 6,000 injured in Wisconsin each winter season in accidents when roads are covered in ice, snow and slush.
- Many crashes are caused by "driving too fast for current conditions." Also, when the first blast of winter arrives, motorists often need to "re-learn" how to drive in slippery conditions.

Safety First - Stay Informed

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues winter storm warnings and watches. Here's what they mean and what you should do.

Winter Storm Watch – Winter storm conditions (heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain) are possible within the next 36-48 hours. Continue monitoring the weather forecast.

Winter Storm or Ice Storm Warning – A significant winter event is occurring or will begin in the next 24 hours. The combination of snow, sleet, freezing rain and moderate winds will impact travel and outdoor activities. An Ice Storm Warning is issued when mostly freezing rain is expected with ice accumulations of ¼ inch or more within a 12-hour period. Take necessary precautions – consider canceling travel plans.

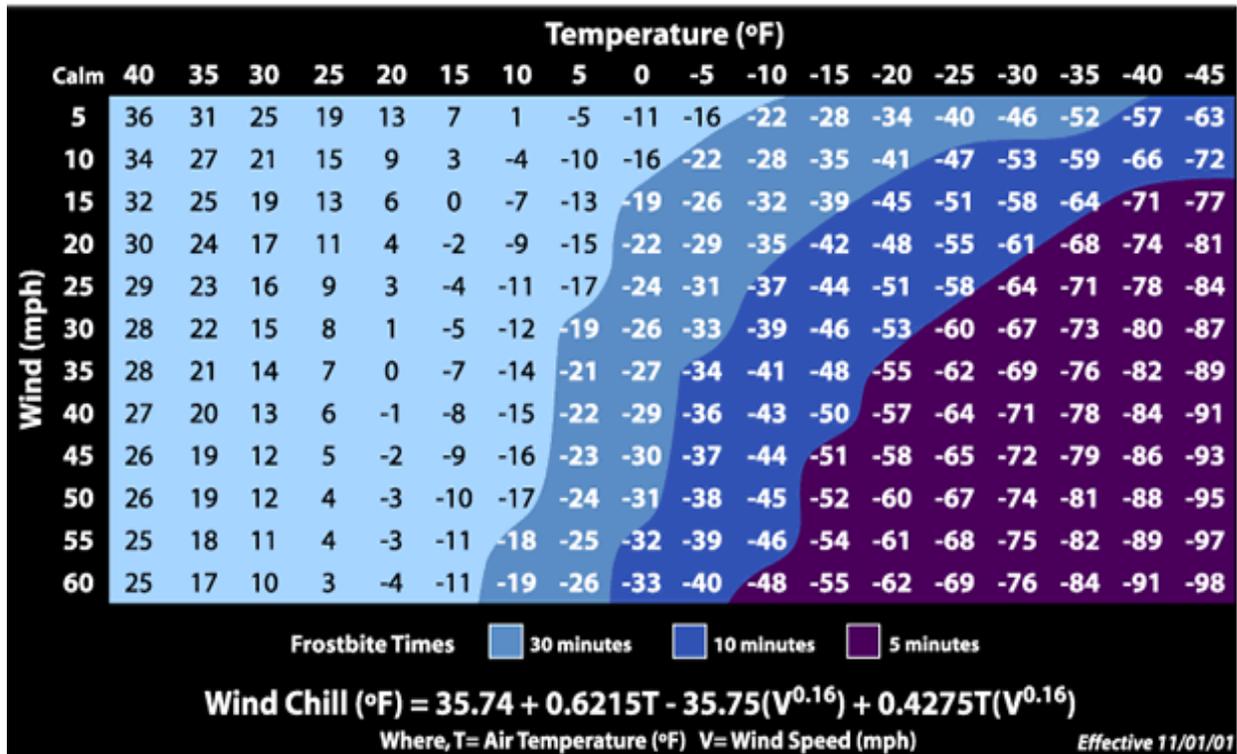
Blizzard Warning – A dangerous event with winds that are 35 mph or greater in combination with falling and/or blowing snow that reduces visibility to 1/4 mile or less for a duration of at least 3 hours.

Wind Chill Advisory – Issued for wind chills between -20 and -34 combined with winds for three hours or more.

Wind Chill Warning – Issued for wind chills below -35 or colder combined with winds for three hours or more.



NWS Windchill Chart



Keep Warm and Safe

Frostbite is damage to body tissue caused by extreme cold. A wind chill around -20°F could cause frostbite in just 15 minutes or less. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear tips or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, seek medical care immediately!

Hypothermia is a condition that develops when the body temperature drops below 95°F . It is very deadly. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, disorientation, slurred speech and drowsiness. Seek medical care immediately!

Overexertion is dangerous. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make an existing medical condition worse.

Pets also need extra care when the temperatures fall. They should be brought inside when the temperature reaches 30°F with wind chill. Dogs and cats can get frost-bitten ears, nose and feet if left outside during bitter cold weather. Chemicals used to melt snow and ice can also irritate pets' paws – be sure to keep anti-freeze, salt and other poisons away from pets.

Be Prepared At Home

Some of the dangers associated with winter storms include loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies. To help protect your family, now is the time to put together a disaster supply kit. Here are some items to include:

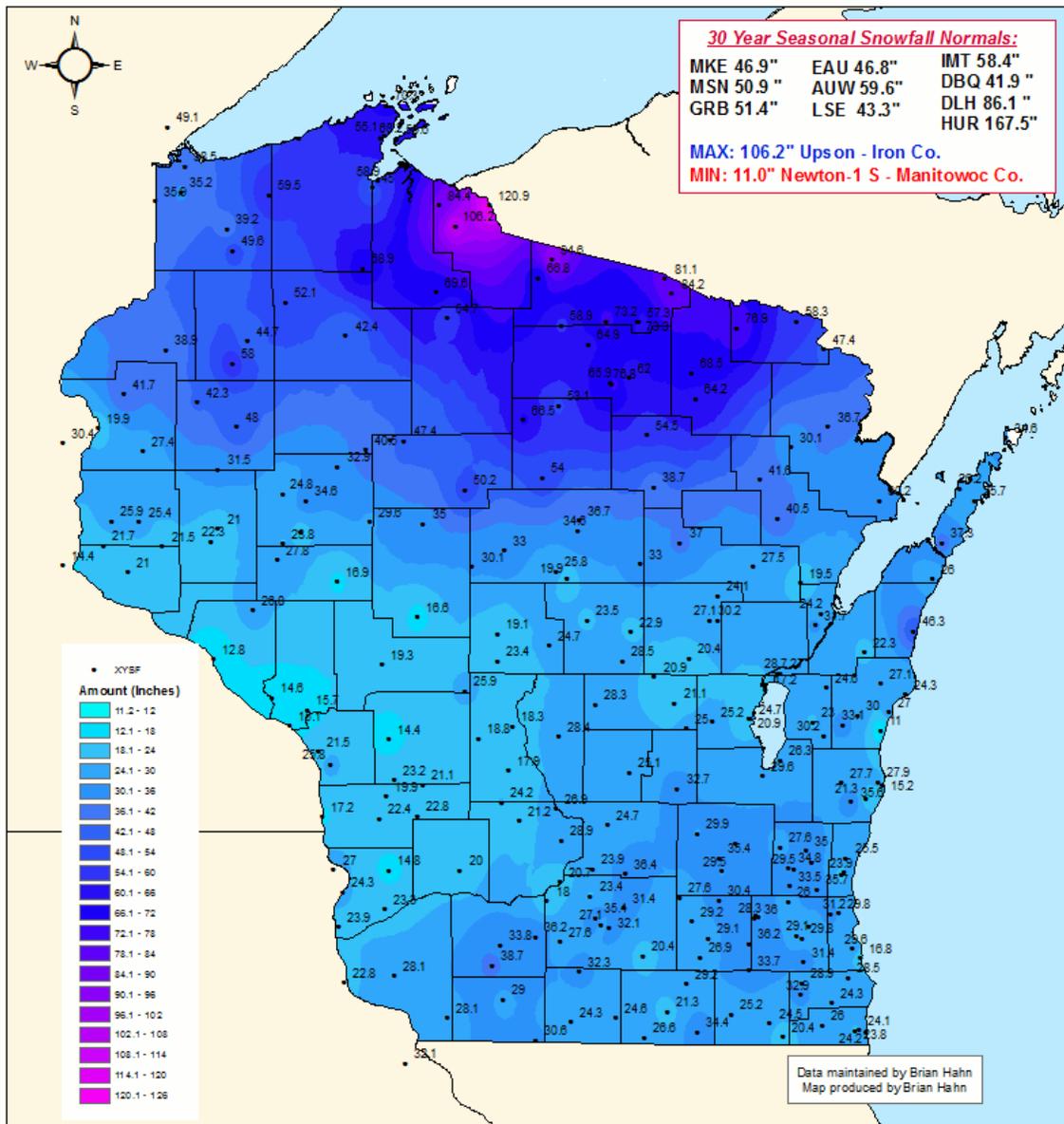
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and a commercial radio
- Bottled water and non-perishable food that requires no cooking
- First-aid supplies
- Fire extinguisher, smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector
- If appropriate, extra medications and baby items
- If you have an emergency heating source such as a fireplace or space heater, make sure you have proper ventilation
- Make sure pets have shelter and plenty of food and water

For additional information, contact your county or tribal emergency management office, the National Weather Service or ReadyWisconsin. Tips on winter safety, developing your own personal preparedness plan and building an emergency kit can also be found at the following websites:

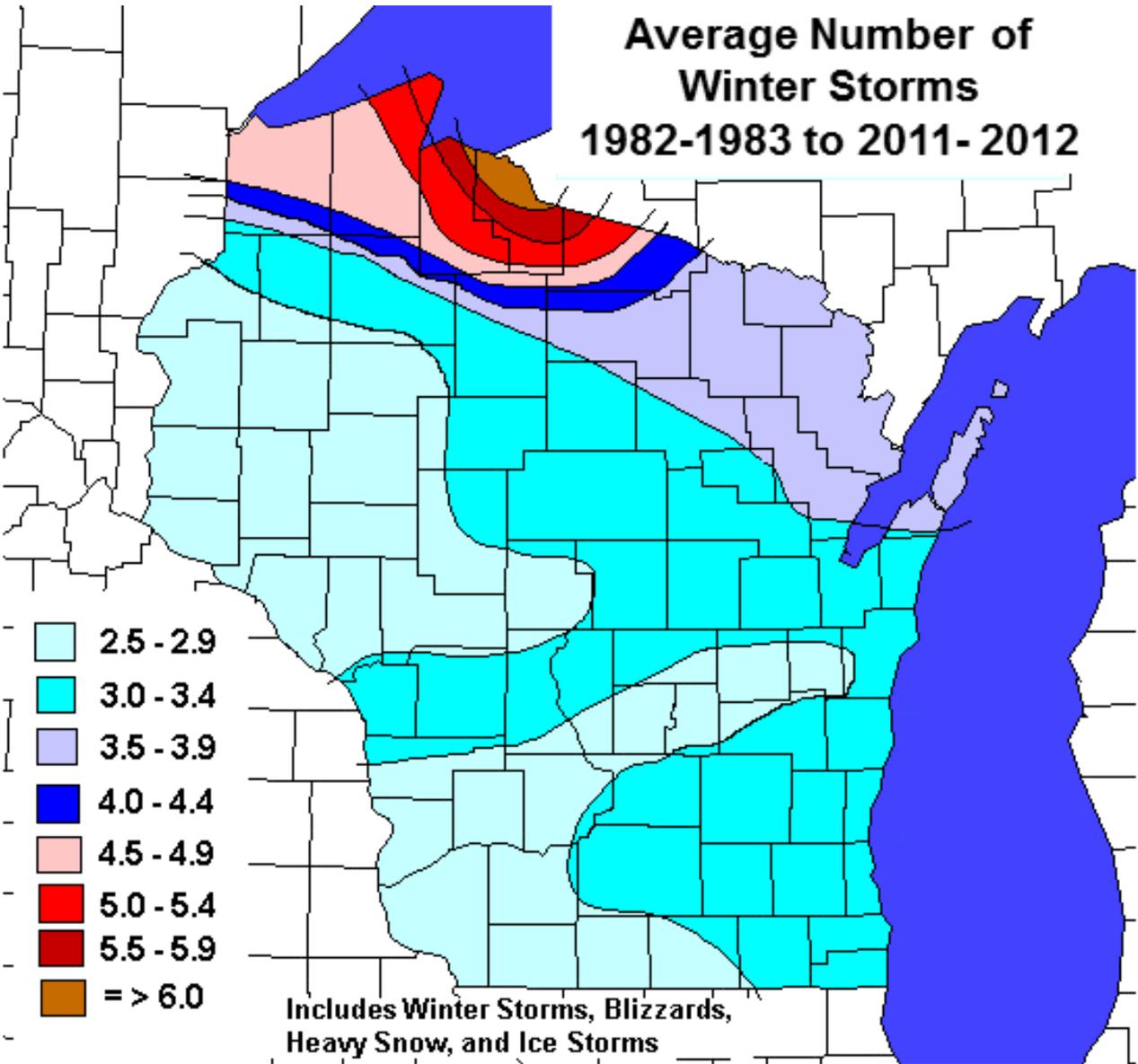


National Weather Service Milwaukee/Sullivan 2011-2012 Seasonal Snowfall

– Data from 239 NWS Weather Observers –

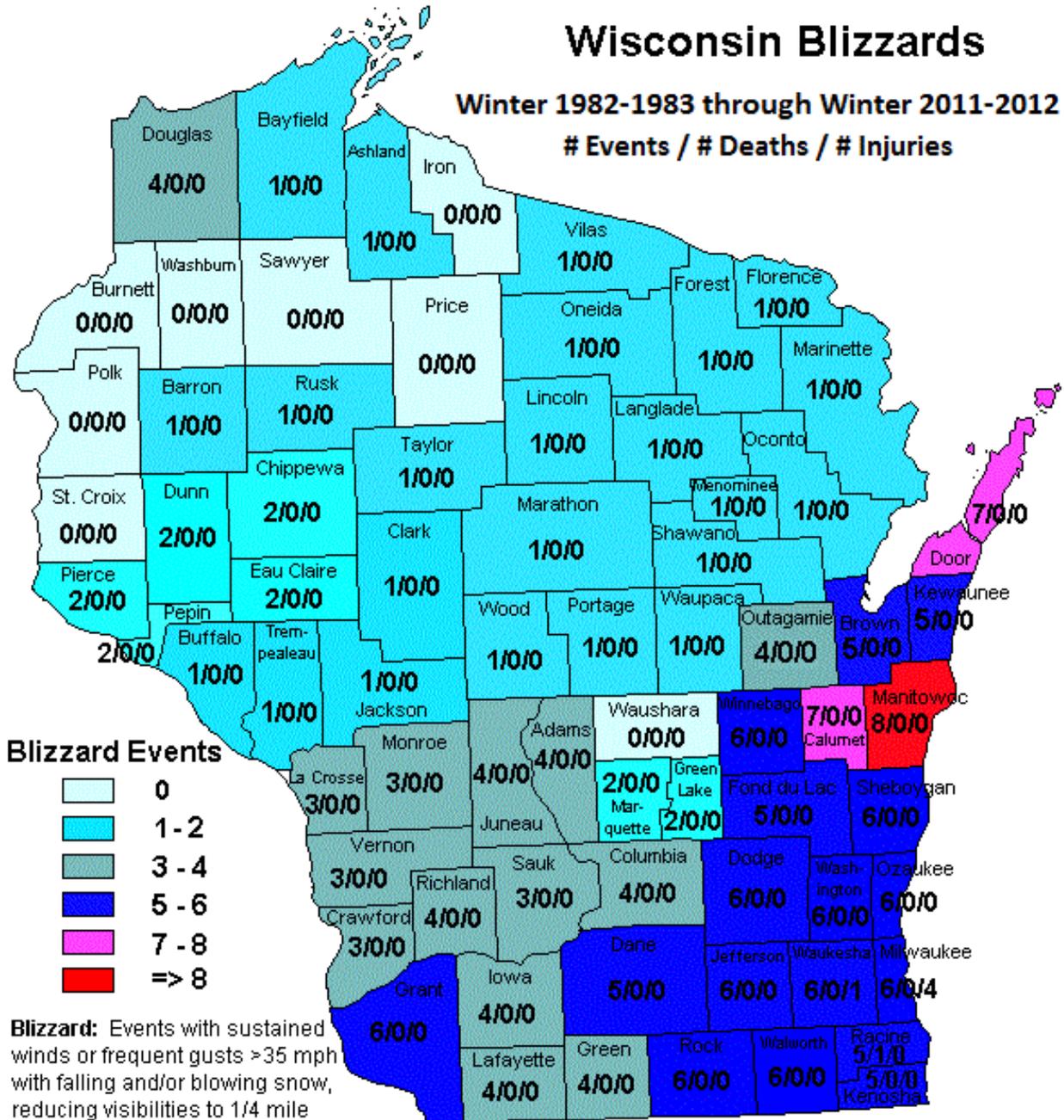


Average Number of Winter Storms 1982-1983 to 2011-2012



Wisconsin Blizzards

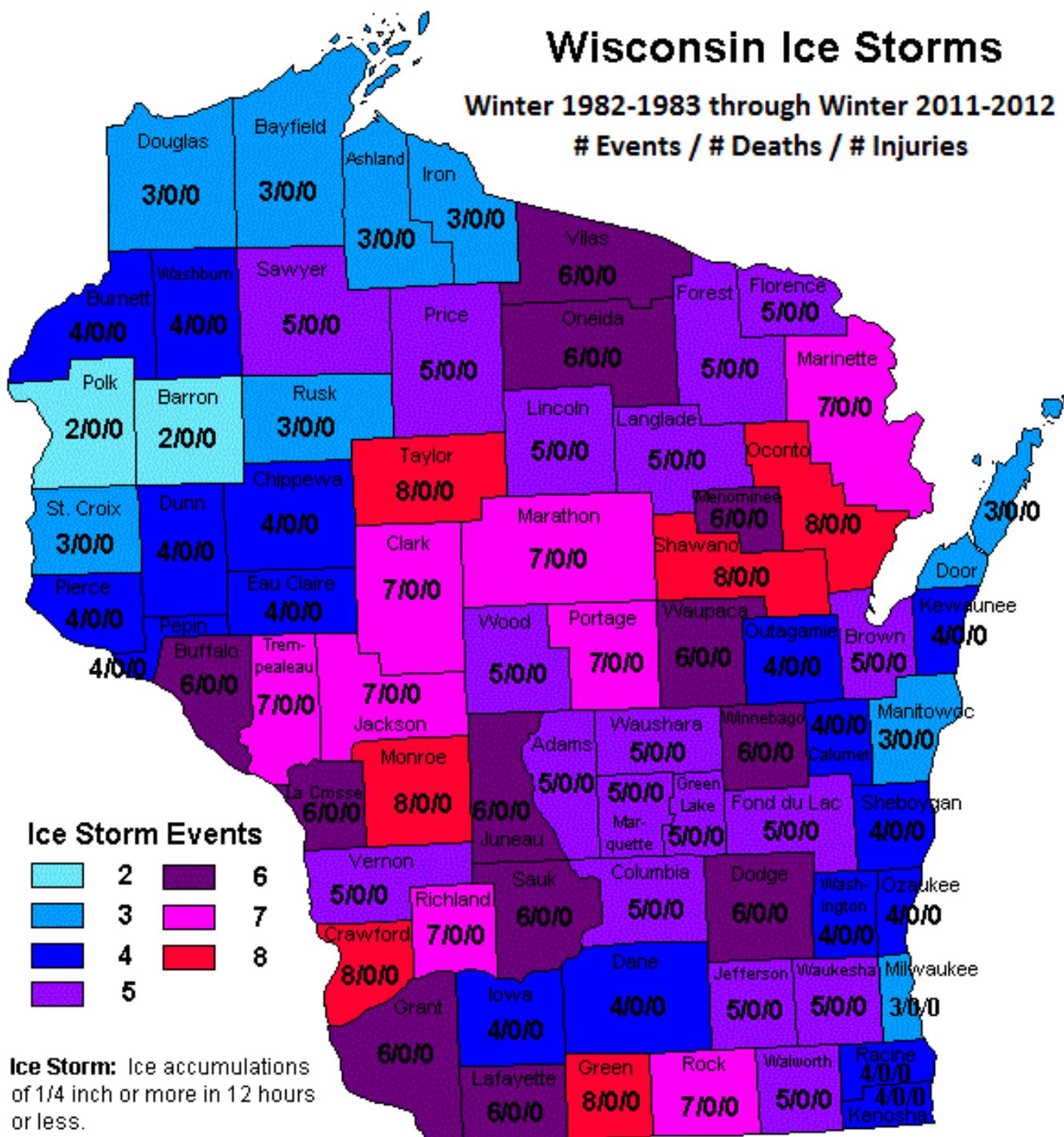
Winter 1982-1983 through Winter 2011-2012
 # Events / # Deaths / # Injuries



Wisconsin Ice Storms

Winter 1982-1983 through Winter 2011-2012

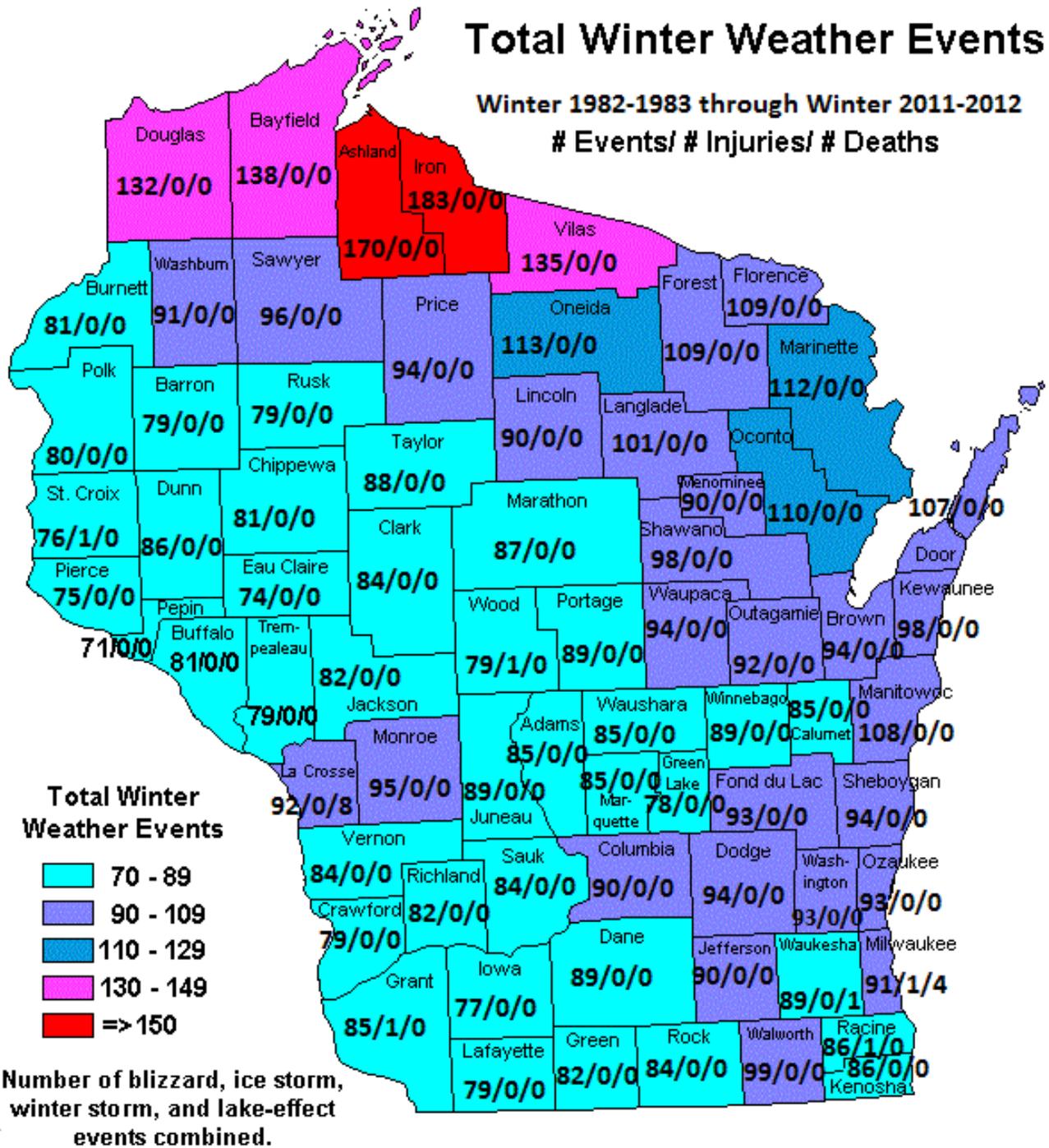
Events / # Deaths / # Injuries



Total Winter Weather Events

Winter 1982-1983 through Winter 2011-2012

Events/ # Injuries/ # Deaths



Number of Winter Storms In Wisconsin Per Winter

