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## **November Snow Climatology for the Midwest**

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In the Midwest, November is typically the first month of the cold season when measureable snowfall occurs over a majority of the region, according to the Midwestern Regional Climate Center at the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS). However, it is not uncommon for northern portions of the Midwest to experience their first snowfall in October.

Herman, Michigan, located in the Upper Peninsula, reported the first snowfall in the Midwest this year, with 0.1 inches recorded on October 19. Generally, locations further north will experience an earlier onset of snowfall each season.

The earliest median date for the first snowfall in the Midwest is October 10. The median date is determined such that half the years are before this date and half occur after this date. The median dates and normal snowfall values were calculated using data from 1981 to 2010.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the median date is early in the season, on November 4. Green Bay, Wisconsin and Des Moines, Iowa generally receive their first snowfall around November 10. The median date of first snowfall in Chicago, Illinois is November 20.

Further to the south, the first snowfall of the season typically occurs in late November and early to mid-December. Indianapolis, Indiana and Champaign-Urbana, Illinois have a median date for the first snowfall on November 25 and 30, respectively. St. Louis, Missouri generally receives their first snowfall around December 1 and Lexington, Kentucky on December 4.

Based on climatology, it is highly probable that residents in the northern latitude cities of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Green Bay, Wisconsin will see snowfall in November. Minneapolis has experienced November snowfall in 94 percent of the years on record and Green Bay has experienced November snowfall in 90 percent of the years since records began in 1886.

The central Midwest also has a good chance of seeing snowfall in November. Des Moines, Iowa and Indianapolis, Indiana have experienced November snowfall in about 75 percent of the years on record.

Even though St. Louis, Missouri and Lexington, Kentucky are located further south, they too experience snowfall in November. In fact, Lexington has received measurable November snowfall in 58 percent of the years since records began in 1887.

So, how much November snowfall is normal across the Midwest? The November snowfall normal is 8.8 inches in Minneapolis and 4 inches in Green Bay.

Located further to the south than Green Bay but downwind of Lake Michigan, Big Rapids, Michigan generally experiences a snowier November, with a normal snowfall of 4.9 inches. The higher November snowfall normal in Big Rapids reflects the influence of lake-effect snowfall, which occurs when cold, Canadian air masses move across the Great Lakes while water temperatures are still relatively warm.

November snowfall normals decrease moving further south: 2.9 inches in Des Moines, Iowa; 1.3 inches in Chicago, Illinois; 0.8 inches in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois and Columbus, Ohio; 0.7 inches in Indianapolis, Indiana and St. Louis, Missouri; and 0.3 inches in Lexington, Kentucky.

The snowiest November on record for Minneapolis occurred in 1991 when they received 46.9 inches of snowfall. Minneapolis received two record-breaking snowstorms that November, both of which remain on the Top 14 Largest Snowfalls in the Twin Cities list (numbers 1 and 13), according to the Minnesota Climatology Working Group. Green Bay has sustained their record for snowiest November for 121 years, since 1889 when 21.3 inches was recorded.

The Great Appalachian Storm of November 1950 produced significant damage and record-breaking snowfall totals for the Appalachian region and eastern United States. During this storm, Columbus, Ohio and Lexington, Kentucky recorded a total of 15.2 inches and 9.7 inches, respectively, making 1950 the snowiest November on record for both locations.