

# The Times

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## Arctic cold could bring freezing rain

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Utilities, highway crews check equipment, issue alerts.

By Melody Brumble The Times

From balmy to brrrrr in two hours.

Temperatures plummeted from the mid-60s to the low 40s as an arctic air mass rolled across the area Monday afternoon. The frigid air, combined with moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, may dump sleet and freezing rain on the area tonight. Shoppers at Albertson's grocery in Bossier City leaned into a fierce north wind, arms crossed over their chests as the sudden cold bit through thin clothing at lunchtime Monday.

"The shopping carts were just blowing across the parking lot," said Angela Evans of Bossier City. "They (the forecasters) were right this time. I'm out of a few things. I just got off work, but I decided it would be best to come now."

She stocked up on basics - bread, milk and meat - and grabbed some "quick and easy" snacks for her kids in case everyone becomes housebound Wednesday. The National Weather Service on Monday predicted no significant accumulation, but hydrologist C.S. Ross cautioned that bridges and exposed roadways may ice over. The state Department of Transportation and Development regional office in Bossier City finished attaching salt spreaders to its heavy equipment Monday. DOTD already has a stock of salt for slippery roads, said regional administrator Bruce Easterly.

"We are basically on alert," he said Monday. "It appears that what we're looking at is precipitation coming in tomorrow afternoon. We will switch to standby status then."

Shreveport city employees also are on alert. The city laid in 500 tons of sand and three sand spreaders in case ice accumulates on streets. The state normally sees problems first with the elevated parts of Interstate 49 and other interstate overpasses. The city generally gets its first call on the Jewella Avenue overpass and Linwood viaduct, said streets & drainage superintendent Johnv Falcon.

**Bud Chauncy, owner of and instructor at First Class Driving School, believes ice-related road collisions can be avoided with a little patience and planning. "The biggest thing I would suggest is slow down, cut your speed in half. I would recommend a 6-8 second minimum time/space between you and someone else. Do everything slow and gradual, from turns to changes in speed. Jerky (motion) causes definite loss of control on ice and snow."**

AEP/SWEPCO and CLECO have crews on standby to handle downed transmission lines and trees if ice accumulates. People should unplug major appliances and electronic equipment if there's an electrical outage, said SWEPCO spokesman Scott McCloud. People also should report downed electric lines immediately and avoid the lines in case they still carry electrical current.

Shreveport Regional Airport has snow and ice equipment on standby. The airport will offer advisories throughout the week. Monday, winter storms in the Northeast didn't disrupt flights into and out of Shreveport, said Shreveport Regional spokesman Bill Cooksey.