



# Why does wind power generate less electricity in winter

How does cold weather affect wind turbines?

But if specific turbines are not appropriately protected for cold conditions, extreme cold temperatures can cause wind turbine blades to 'ice,' where ice builds up on the wind turbine blades and affects the aerodynamics and forces on the turbine. And that ice buildup can slow the turbines down, or stop them altogether.

Can wind power be used in cold climates?

We use these technologies here in the U.S., too. They're why the Great Plains, the Upper Midwest and New England can make use of wind energy year-round. In fact, data show that wind turbines actually produce more energy in these regions in the winter. So in general, we can safely rely on weatherized wind power in cold climates.

Why did wind farms stop producing electricity during a storm?

And those early reports were true--mostly. During the storm, some wind farms did stop producing electricity because their turbines iced over. Extreme cold weather can affect many parts of our energy system--not just wind power.

Why are wind turbines so cold in Texas?

The primary issue with the wind turbines in Texas is that such extreme cold was not expected based on the historical record of weather, and therefore the developers did not weatherize the wind turbines. Wind turbines operate effectively in much colder locations than Texas, including Canada, Sweden, Alaska, etc.

Do wind turbines need cold weather?

"Historically in Texas, given the warm climate, it hasn't been necessary." In Canada, where wind turbines can experience icing up to 20% of the time in winter months, special "cold weather packages" are installed to provide heating to turbine components such as the gearbox, yaw and pitch motors and battery, according to the Canadian government.

How does ice affect wind turbines?

And that ice buildup can slow the turbines down, or stop them altogether. So for instance, you might remember the terrible Texas cold front in 2021, which took down electrical systems and led to the deaths of at least 240 people.

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