



CHAPTER 4: RULES FOR THE NORTH



In adventures in Icewind Dale, the environment takes on a life of its own and becomes as much of a foe as any monster. Bringing the biting cold and challenging terrain to life can add some excitement to your game.

AFFLICTIONS

The elements suffer a wide range of negative effects to the living.

Afflictions in Icewind Dale are dangerous, but not completely unavoidable.

Lesser restoration removes one affliction and *greater restoration* removes all afflictions affecting a creature. Alternatively, all afflictions are removed from a creature at the end of a long rest, provided the long rest is completed outside of the environment that caused it.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

The terrain and weather presented here should be a challenge regardless of tier. To facilitate this, the DCs and damage of the effects are determined by the ease of the task and the tier of the characters, as outlined in the table below. For example, the saving throw for glittersnow (an easy Constitution save) would be 9 for a group of 1st level characters, but 15 for a group of 20th level characters.

Difficulty Class by Tier

Tier	Easy	Average	Difficult
1	9	11	13
2	11	13	15
3	13	15	17
4	15	17	19+

MUNDANE AFFLICTIONS

Characters exposed to the elements can suffer a wide range of negative effects.

EXHAUSTION BY EXPOSURE

Exposure to the cold can cause a wide range of afflictions that incur levels of exhaustion. After being exposed, a creature must succeed on an **average** Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Each condition provides when this saving throw is made and the manner in which the levels of exhaustion are removed.

Altitude Sickness. At the end of each hour spent above 8,000 feet in elevation. Levels of exhaustion gained from altitude sickness can't be removed until the creature completes a long rest at elevations below 8,000 feet.

Hypothermia. At the end of each hour spent in frigid temperatures, or at the end of each minute spent in frigid water. Characters wearing wet clothing make saving throws to avoid hypothermia with disadvantage. These levels of exhaustion can't be removed until the creature completes a long rest in a warm and dry environment.

Wet Lung. At the end of each hour spent in a wet, cold environment at altitudes in excess of 8,000 feet. The character suffers ragged breathing and fits of wracking coughing—automatically failing any Dexterity (Stealth) checks that rely on remaining unheard. Further, characters suffering from wet lung make future saving throws to resist exhaustion with disadvantage. These levels of exhaustion can't be removed until the creature spends a tenday in a warm and dry environment.

FROSTBITE

Characters with exhaustion caused by exposure to cold risk frostbite—especially if they're not wearing the proper clothing. At the end of each hour the character must succeed on an **average** Constitution saving throw or suffer the effects of frostbite. Frostbitten characters make Dexterity- or Strength-based ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws with disadvantage.



EXHAUSTION BY EXPOSURE

Creatures who have four or more levels of exhaustion caused by exposure to the cold are also prone to unusual behavior:

Terminal Burrowing. Creatures demonstrating this behavior seek out small, enclosed spaces that don't offer substantive shelter from the cold—furniture, snow, etc.

Paradoxical Undressing. As the body succumbs to the cold, blood rushes back into extremities causing false sensations of warmth. In response, creatures discard articles of clothing—further endangering themselves.

Frostbitten creatures are cured by *lesser restoration* or similar magic or with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check made upon completing a long rest.

SNOW BLINDNESS

Snow and ice reflect the sun's light—blinding the unprepared. After each hour spent traversing a snowy area on a sunny day, a creature must succeed on an **easy** Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the creature spends an hour outside of it. Characters wearing snow goggles or similar eye protection automatically succeed on the saving throw.

MAGICAL AFFLICTIONS

The presence of magic and otherworldly creatures creates unique dangers in the form of the following afflictions:

FROST ROT

This affliction is caused when a creature suffers necrotic damage while possessing one or more levels of exhaustion caused by exposure. The extremities (typically the hands) become black and covered with festering sores. Weapon attacks and spell attacks from spells with somatic components are made with disadvantage. This affliction lasts until the levels of exhaustion are removed.

LIVING SPELLS

Though extremely rare, living spells (see *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*) are occasionally found wandering the wilds of Icewind Dale. These spells are almost always derived from spells that deal cold damage—like *ray of frost*, *cone of cold*, and *ice storm*. In the Forgotten Realms, creatures such as this are usually ancient remnants of the Netherese Empire's terrible magic.

MADNESS

The brutal environment can provoke madness in those who succumb to its influences (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Cabin Fever. While not necessarily caused by exposure to the wilds of Icewind Dale, those cloistered in confined spaces for a prolonged period of time risk this unusual malady. For every 24 hours spent in such a space, a creature must succeed on an **average** Charisma saving throw. On a failure, they gain a long-term madness which causes them to attempt to escape their confinement—using violence if necessary.

Blind Rage. Creatures suffering from snow blindness are known to succumb to violent outbursts. After each hour spent suffering from

snow blindness, the creature must succeed on an **easy** Wisdom saving throw or gain a short-term madness which drives them to angrily attack nearby creatures with melee weapons attacks.

Howling Laughter. The incessant, howling winds of Icewind Dale accompanied by the seemingly endless expanses of snow and ice instills fatalistic laughter in its victims. After each hour spent wandering the wastes, each creature must succeed on a **difficult** Charisma saving throw or gain a short-term madness which causes them to sit down and refuse to budge—all while laughing hysterically.

HERBS OF THE FROZEN NORTH

Despite the chill weather, there is a wealth of unique herbs in the frozen north. Characters who are proficient with an herbalism kit can find and harvest these valuable plants, potentially using them for a number of medicinal uses. Herblore is a valuable skill for those adventuring parties with little or no access to magical healing.

FINDING HERBS

The DM always has final option to say yes or no on whether an herb can be found, but if you wish leave the presence of a helpful plant to chance, consider the terrain and time of the year.

If a plant is determined to be present, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check is required to locate it. This check takes one hour and characters who are proficient with an herbalism kit gain advantage on this check. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check correctly identifies the herb. Those that fail the check by 5 or more incorrectly identifies the herb as a different herb.

TERRAIN

The terrain of Icewind Dale is varied, but includes:

Fresh Water Adjacent: Includes the lakes Maer Dualdon, Lac Dinneshere, and Redwaters, or the Redrun stream and the Shaengarne River.

Forest: The Lonelywood and other small wooded areas such as the small woods south of the Eastway.

Ice: The Reghed Glacier or the icebergs in the Sea of Moving Ice.

Mountains and Hills: Includes both Kelvin's Cairn and the Spine of the World.

Valleys: Areas like Bremen's Run, the Fields of Slaughter, or Icewind Pass.

Chance of Plant being Present

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Fresh Water Adjacent	0%	10%	30%	20%
Forest	15%	30%	50%	30%
Ice	0%	0%	5%	0%
Mountains and Hills	0%	5%	10%	5%
Valleys	0%	10%	20%	5%

HARVESTING AND PREPARING HERBS

Some herbs can be eaten raw, but others require preparation before they are made useful. Harvesting and preparation requires a successful Wisdom check with proficiency in an Herbalism kit. Herbs spoil a week after harvesting and must be consumed within an hour of their preparation.

Eaten Raw (DC 5): The herb need only be properly harvested.

Brewed into a Tea (DC 10): The herb is mixed with water and steeped at a specific temperature.

Eaten Cooked (DC 10): The herb is cooked following a specific recipe.

Poultice (DC 15): The herb is mixed with water and mashed to form a paste that is spread over the affected area.

HERBS IN ICEWIND DALE

Medically relevant herbs in Icewind Dale are most commonly mosses, lichens, low-growing shrubs, and grasses with flowers or berries found very rarely during the very short summer growing season.

Arctillia: When this rare moss is mixed with water and coal ash in a poultice and spread over the eyes of a blinded creature, it gives it advantage on saving throws to recover from that condition for 24 hours. In order to be effective, the poultice must be left on the creature's eyes for the duration.

Beorunna's Cure-All: The pale stems of this plant must be boiled into a bitter tea that reinforces the patient's constitution when consumed. The character rendering aid gains advantage on Medicine checks made to treat diseases.

Feverbalm: The small petals of this dark purple flower are steeped in lukewarm water creating a tonic for those suffering from madness. 1d10 hours after the tonic is consumed, a creature removes one level of Madness.

Ilmater's Breath: Stalks of this grass are chewed raw prior to a long rest and at the conclusion of the rest the creature gains 1d6 temporary hit points.

Kaant: When this lichen is rapidly dried over a low flame, it forms fibrous strips that accelerate a creature's metabolism. For 8 hours a creature that chews it gains advantage on saving throws



to prevent exhaustion due to cold temperatures. However, Kaant rapidly depletes the body's energy and its users require twice the normal amount of food and water on days they use the herb.

Mother's Leaf: The leaves of this low, woody bush must be boiled into a tea to be effective. A creature that drinks the tea gains advantage on saving throws against disease for 1 hour.

Shagron Sweetbark: Stripping the bark from this shrub and brewing it into a tea can help stave off sleep. A creature that drinks the tea gains advantage on saving throws to avoid falling asleep for 8 hours.

Sourberries: A handful of these pale blue berries eaten raw give a creature advantage on saving throws to resist paralysis for 1 hour.

Trueroot: The red roots of this spindly tuber have the same effect as an antitoxin when eaten cooked.

Woundwort: When this small plant is mashed into a poultice and spread over a wound, a creature regains an additional 1d4 hit points when completing a short rest.

TERRAIN AND WEATHER

Icwind Dale is one of the harshest and least forgiving environments in Faerûn.

TERRAIN & WEATHER IN ICEWIND DALE

The terrain and weather phenomenon in Icwind Dale are dangerous, but not completely unavoidable.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

The terrain and weather presented here should be a challenge regardless of tier. To facilitate this, the DCs and damage of the effects are determined by the ease of the task and the tier of the characters, as outlined in the table below. For example, the saving throw for glittersnow (an **easy** Constitution save) would be 9 for a group of 1st level characters, but 15 for a group of 20th level characters.

Difficulty Class by Tier

Tier	Easy	Average	Difficult
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3	13	15	17
4	15	17	19+

Hazard Damage by Tier

Tier	Mild	Moderate	Deadly
1	3 (1d6)	9 (2d8)	11 (2d10)
2	10 (3d6)	27 (6d8)	33 (6d10)
3	21 (6d6)	45 (10d8)	55 (10d10)
4	28 (8d6)	54 (12d8)	66 (12d8)

IDENTIFYING TERRAIN & WEATHER

Most examples of terrain and weather are easy enough to detect (glittersnow, for example, is a swirling mass of blindingly bright ice crystals), but identifying its dangers require a successful **average** Wisdom (Survival) check. Characters that encounter or successfully identify the effect automatically succeed on attempts to identify it if encountered in the future.

Some threats are dangerous because distinguishing them from surrounding terrain is difficult. These effects are annotated as (Concealed). Detecting concealed terrain requires a successful **difficult** Intelligence (Investigation) check or a passive Investigation score equal to or higher than the DC needed to detect it.

MUNDANE TERRAIN & WEATHER

The more commonly encountered terrain and weather phenomenon encountered in Icwind Dale include:

BRITTLEDEATH (CONCEALED)

Brittledeath is perilously thin of ice that usually forms over shallow pools of tremendously frigid water. If more than 40 pounds is placed on the ice, a 5-foot section of the ice collapses—plunging creatures in the area into the water below. Escaping the ice requires a successful **average** Strength (Athletics) check, however, the thin ice makes escape difficult and imposes disadvantage on checks made to escape.

Brittledeath is especially difficult to detect. Checks made to detect it are made at disadvantage.

CREVASSES (CONCEALED)

These large cracks in the snow and ice most likely to be found when traversing a glacier and are typically 10 – 60-foot-deep (1d6 x 10) and 1 – 20-foot-wide (1d20). While usually visible, they are occasionally covered with brittle ice and a dusting of snow which makes spotting them difficult. A creature that steps onto the ice concealing such a crevasse must succeed on an **average** Dexterity saving throw or fall. Escaping a crevasse requires succeeding on a **difficult** Strength (Athletics) check.

GLITTERSNOW

These vast clouds of tiny, delicate ice fragments reflect the sun's light—blinding the unprepared. After spending ten minutes passing through a field of glittersnow, a creature must succeed on an **easy** Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the creature spends an hour outside it. Characters wearing snow goggles or similar eye protection make the saving throw with advantage.

HAVOC STORMS

Wind isn't terribly dangerous in and of itself, but in some circumstances, it carries hail or shards of ice along with it. These terrible storms effect a large area, sometimes miles across, and destroy everything in their path. For every 10 minutes spent in a havoc storm, creatures and unattended objects in havoc wind take **mild** damage. In particularly savage cases, the storms deals **moderate** or **deadly** damage but these situations are rare. Taking shelter from the storm is the wisest thing to do but even the shelters themselves risk destruction.

SINKSNOW (CONCEALED)

These areas of particularly fine and wet snow act identically to quicksand (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*) but are larger—usually 20 feet square and 20 feet deep—and deal **mild** cold damage to completely submerged creatures.

SLIPSTONE (CONCEALED)

Typically found among rocky outcroppings, slipstone is dense, dark ice that appears similar to stone and has spelled doom to countless climbers. Any Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made to climb or navigate an area where slipstone is present are made with disadvantage. Detecting the threat isn't enough to negate it; stories exist of expeditions that had to go miles out of their way due to slipstone.

MAGICAL TERRAIN & WEATHER

Some terrain and weather phenomenon encountered in Icewind Dale are of supernatural origin, including:

THE PALE PRINCE'S BREATH

Some areas in Icewind Dale bear a strong connection to the Feywild. Here the influences of malevolent fey are undeniable. The Pale Prince's breath manifests as a 20-foot radius sphere of swirling, rainbow-hued snow, and wind that appears from nowhere and disappears just as quickly. Each creature in the area must succeed on an **easy** Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. While charmed, creatures experience hallucinations of

blissful warmth and are compelled to stop where they're at to lie down and rest. A charmed creature repeats the save at the end of each minute, ending the charmed condition early on a successful save. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to the Pale Prince's breath for 24 hours. A creature that fails three saves before succeeding is petrified—frozen solid from the supernatural cold.

DYING FIELDS (CONCEALED)

Usually the remains of ancient battlefields or lost expeditions, these hazards consist of undead threats lying dormant beneath the ice and snow who are awakened by the presence of the living. The undead are typically corporeal undead (skeletons, zombies, etc.), but incorporeal (shadows, wraiths) or uncommon undead creatures (dracoliches, vampires) can also be encountered.

LEVISTUS' WRATH

Wet snow driven by wild winds cause ice to form around a random creature in the area who must succeed on a **difficult** Strength saving throw or be encased in a thick coating of murky ice. While encased, the target is immune to all damage, is incapacitated, and can't breathe. The ice has an AC of 15 and half of the target's maximum hit points. Destroying the ice frees the encased creature.

THIEVING WINDS

On bad days, the wind whipping down from the Spine of the World is fast and bitterly cold. On terrible days, however, it steals the breath from your lungs. At the end of each minute in thieving winds, creatures within the area must succeed on an **easy** Constitution saving throw or be unable to breathe. At the end of each minute this saving throw is repeated, allowing the character to breath on a success. Thieving winds last for 1d4 minutes.

ELEMENTAL VORTICES (CONCEALED)

The Feywild isn't the only other plane of existence that occasionally overlaps the Material. In some circumstances, the elemental planes of air, earth, fire, and water do as well. In addition to the increased likelihood of encountering an associated elemental, the area within a mile of the subterranean vortex has the following properties:

Air. Whipping winds fill the area. Ranged weapon attacks and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage. Havoc storms (see above) are common here.

Earth. Crevasses (see above) occur with greater frequency—sometimes created spontaneously under the characters' feet. Slipstone (see above) is common here.



Fire. Geysers erupt from the ground, sending jets of scalding water in a 20-foot diameter. Creatures in the area must succeed on an **average** Dexterity saving throw or take **moderate** fire damage. Sinksnow (see above) is common here.

Water. Pools of water beneath the ice are incredibly deep and the ice dangerously thin—a perilous combination. Brittledeath (see above) is common here.

CIRCLE OF STANDING STONES

Whether they're the remnants of long-dead civilizations or the work of mischievous fey, these unusual features serve as oases in the desolate wastes of Icewind Dale. They are difficult to find; their locations are jealously guarded secrets and they're seldom unoccupied. Artic chwingas are known to frequent these circles.

Their features usually consist of tall standing stones carved with ancient lore, undecipherable symbols, or graffiti, though some are little more than piles of unworked stones arranged in a rough circle. They all have one thing in common, however, the interior seldom bears more than a light dusting of snow and leafy, fruit-bearing flora grow within. A creature that spends an action eating the fruit from one of the plants within the circle gains enough

nutrition for a day and a random benefit (roll 1d6 and consult the table, below). A character that spends an action inspecting a fruit that succeeds on a **difficult** Wisdom (Survival) check determines what benefit the fruit bestows if eaten. The fruit persists for 24 hours after leaving the circle at which point it rots.

Circle Fruit Effects

1d6	Effect
1	Healing. The character regains 4d4 + 4 hit points.
2	Endurance. The character makes any saving throws to avoid exhaustion with advantage for 24 hours.
3	Animal Friend. The character can cast <i>charm monster</i> (beasts only) once in the next 24 hours.
4	Iron Hide. The character gains a +1 bonus to AC for 24 hours.
5	Resilient. The character makes saving throws tied to a randomly determined ability score with advantage for 24 hours.
6	Berry Herald. The character can cast <i>goodberry</i> three times.