

Arctic blast puts Europe's homeless, travelers in peril

February 12 2021



People walk with dogs after more snow fell overnight near Cullercoats on the north east coast of England, Friday Feb. 12, 2021. A cold snap continues to grip much of the nation Friday. (Owen Humphreys/PA via AP)

Aid workers are warning that the sharp drop in temperatures across parts of northern Europe this month has put homeless people at serious risk.

German homeless aid group BAGW said Friday that four people have been found frozen to death since a blast of Arctic air brought freezing temperatures and [heavy snowfall](#) to much of the country last week.

Authorities in the southern city of Nuremberg said a homeless woman was found with a newborn baby in minus 15 Celsius (5 degrees Fahrenheit) temperatures early Friday. A police patrol spotted the 20-year-old woman, a companion and the infant on a ventilation grate outside a subway station. Mother and child were taken to a hospital to warm up and for observation, the dpa news agency reported.

Icy temperatures have also led to numerous accidents on roads and waterways. Police in southwestern Germany said a 49-year-old man was crushed to death Thursday when the tractor he was driving slid and toppled over on an icy field.

In western France, freezing rains turned roads into chutes of treacherous ice. Authorities in Brittany said smaller roads that tie together towns and villages in the largely rural region were unusable. They urged people to stay home. Large trucks were banned from circulation.



Snow covers the tracks at a freight station of the railway in Halle/Saale, Germany, Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. The winter weather with snow and sub-zero temperatures expected for Germany on the upcoming weekend. (Hendrik Schmidt/dpa via AP)



People walk through the snow covered old town of Halle/Saale, Germany, Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. The winter weather with snow and sub-zero temperatures expected for Germany on the upcoming weekend. (Hendrik Schmidt/dpa via AP)



A car is buried under drifting snow on a hillside near the sea in southern Folkestone, England, Friday Feb. 12, 2021. The cold snap continues to grip much of the nation Friday. (Gareth Fuller/PA Wire(/PA via AP)



People skate on Nanneviid Lake in Oudehaske, Netherlands, Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. With many lakes and canals in the Netherlands frozen over, Dutch skating fans flocked to the ice Friday, causing a headache for authorities trying to enforce social distancing measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong)



Cold morning by the Limfjord body of water covered by ice in Aalborg, Denmark, Friday Feb. 12 2021, with the the cement factory Roerdal's chimneys in background. In Aalborg the temperatures were around minus 15 degrees overnight. (Henning Bagger / Ritzau via AP)

The German Red Cross warned people to be careful when skating or walking on frozen lakes and rivers after several adults and children fell through the ice had to be rescued in recent days.

Andreas Paatz, the head of the group's water rescue service, said many people don't realize that ice on standing water needs to be at least 15 centimeters thick and on running water it needs to be 20 centimeters thick to support a person.

Authorities in northern Germany have for the first time in years

deployed icebreakers to smash passages through frozen shipping canals.

In the neighboring Netherlands, skating fans flocked to the ice Friday, causing a headache for authorities trying to enforce social distancing measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus

The [cold weather](#) that has gripped northern Europe is forecast to make its way toward the southeast in the coming days. The Greek weather service predicted Athens might see snowfall.

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