

Blizzard buffets East Coast with deep snow, winds, flooding

January 30 2022, by Mark Pratt and Mike Catalini



Dale McElwee clears his Green Street, North Attleboro, Mass. property of snow on Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: Mark Stockwell/The Sun Chronicle via AP

A nor'easter with hurricane-force wind gusts battered much of the East Coast on Saturday, flinging heavy snow that made travel treacherous or impossible, flooding coastlines, and threatening to leave bitter cold in its wake.

The [storm](#) thrashed parts of 10 states, with blizzard warnings that stretched from Virginia to Maine. Philadelphia and New York saw plenty of wind and snow, but Boston was in the crosshairs. The city tied its record for biggest single-day snowfall, with 23.6 inches (60 centimeters), the National Weather Service said.

Winds gusted as high as 83 mph (134 kph) on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Southwest of Boston, the town of Sharon, Massachusetts, had received more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow by Saturday night, while Islip, New York, and Warren, Rhode Island, both saw more than 24 inches (61 centimeters).

The wind scoured the ground bare in some spots and piled the snow into huge drifts in others.

Forecasters watched closely for new snowfall records, especially in Boston. The Boston area's modern snowfall record for a winter storm is 27.6 inches (70 centimeters), set in 2003.

New York City and Philadelphia were far from setting all-time records but still saw significant snowfall, with at least 7.5 inches (19 centimeters) in New York's Central Park and at the Philadelphia airport.



A couple walks through snow on Beacon Street past the Public Garden, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in Boston. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

Many flights at airports serving New York, Boston and Philadelphia were canceled Saturday, according to FlightAware. More than 4,500 flights were canceled across the U.S., though airports in the Northeast didn't report evidence of mass strandings, given that the storm was anticipated and many airlines called off flights in advance.

Amtrak canceled all its high-speed Acela trains on the busy Boston-to-Washington corridor and canceled or limited other service.

In Boston, Dominic Torre was out driving his snow dump truck since the storm began overnight, picking up loads of plowed snow from the streets

of and dumping it in unused parking lots known as "snow farms." It was about time for such a big storm, he said.

"You know, we were overdue," he said. "It's pretty hairy, you know, a lot of snow. A lot of snow, a lot of trips, a lot of loads. And it ain't over yet. It ain't done yet."



A man carefully walks down the snow covered subway stairs during a snow storm in Bushwick section of Brooklyn borough of New York on Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in New York. People from New York City to Maine are awakening to deep snow and high winds as a powerful nor'easter kicks up blizzard conditions. Credit: AP Photo/Brittainy Newman

Videos on social media showed wind and waves battering North Weymouth, south of Boston, flooding streets with a slurry of frigid water. Other videos showed a street underwater on Nantucket and waves crashing against the windows of a building in Plymouth.

Over 120,000 homes and businesses lost power in Massachusetts, with failures mounting. No other states reported widespread outages.

Climate change, particularly the warming ocean, probably influenced the strength of the storm, atmospheric researchers said.

Much warmer ocean waters "are certainly playing a role in the strengthening of the storm system and increased moisture available for the storm," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado. "But it isn't the only thing."

The storm had two saving graces: Dry snow less capable of snapping trees and tearing down power lines, and its timing on a weekend, when schools were closed and few people were commuting.



A stranded motorist, at right, gets help shoveling out their car from a passerby with a shovel in Providence, R.I., Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/David Goldman

Parts of 10 states were under blizzard warnings at some point: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, along with much of the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

The National Weather Service considers a storm a blizzard if it has snowfall or blowing snow, as well as winds of at least 35 mph (56 kph)

that reduce visibility to a quarter-mile or less for at least three hours. In many areas, Saturday's storm met those criteria.

Rhode Island, all of which was under a blizzard warning, banned all nonemergency road travel.

In West Hartford, Connecticut, a tractor-trailer jackknifed on Interstate 84, closing several lanes. Massachusetts banned heavy trucks from interstate highways.

Ocean City, Maryland, recorded at least a foot (30 centimeters) of snow. Maryland State Police tweeted that troopers had received more than 670 calls for service and responded to over 90 crashes by midmorning.



Water reaches flood level, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in the East Boston neighborhood of Boston. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul advised people to stay home and warned of below-zero windchills after the storm passes. The state had declared a state of emergency Friday evening.

"This is a very serious storm, very serious. We've been preparing for this. This could be life-threatening," Hochul said. "It's high winds, [heavy snow](#), blizzard conditions—all the elements of a classic nor'easter."

Police on Long Island said they had to help motorists stuck in the snow, and an elderly man shoveling snow died after falling into a swimming pool. In Philadelphia, few drivers ventured onto streets covered in knee-high drifts.

Hardy New Englanders took the storm in stride.

Dave McGillivray, race director for the Boston Marathon, jokingly invited the public to his suburban Boston home on Saturday for a free snow-shoveling clinic.



Signage outside of a motel is covered in snow, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in Ocean City, Md. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Julio Cortez



David Bowling, right, of Salisbury, Md., walks with his children Liam Bowling, 9, center, and Kaylee Bowling, 17, as they check out the snow near amusement rides along the Ocean City Boardwalk following a snowstorm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in Ocean City, Md. Credit: AP Photo/Julio Cortez



Xavier Martinez scrapes snow off his windshield during a storm in Providence, R.I., Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/David Goldman



A dog is followed by a couple as they stroll on the snow-covered boardwalk, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in Ocean City, Md. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Julio Cortez



Snow covers the entrance to the subway station in the Bushwick section of the Brooklyn borough of New York on Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. People from New York City to Maine are awakening to deep snow and high winds as a powerful nor'easter kicks up blizzard conditions. Credit: AP Photo/Brittany Newman



People make their way over the Williamsburg bridge during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in New York. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



A pedestrian walks past a news ticker announcing a historic storm in Boston during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in New York's Times Square. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



A worker clears the sidewalk at East Pier in the East Boston neighborhood of Boston, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer



Auburn Watson sleds down a hill at Riverview Farm Park in Newport News, Va., Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: Jonathon Gruenke /The Daily Press via AP



Visitors make their way through New York's Times Square during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



A maintenance person spreads salt in front of a high rise building with snow stuck to it's windows during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in New York. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



People walk in the snow outside Faneuil Hall, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, in Boston. Forecasters watched closely for new snowfall records, especially in Boston, where the heaviest snow was expected late Saturday. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer



Visitors to New York's Times Square take in the sight during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



A person cross country skis through New York's Times Square during a snow storm, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022. A powerful nor'easter swept up the East Coast on Saturday, threatening to bury parts of 10 states under deep, furiously falling snow accompanied by coastal flooding and high winds that could cut power and leave people shivering in the cold weather expected to follow. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer

"I will provide the driveway and multiple walkways to ensure your training is conducted in the most lifelike situation," he said.

Washington and Baltimore got some [snow](#) but were largely spared. The worst of the nor'easter was expected to blow by Sunday morning into Canada, where several provinces were under warnings.

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