

Severe weather brings snow to Athens, Greek islands

January 24 2022



Vehicles drive as a man cross a street during snowfall in Agios Steganos, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis

A severe weather front has hit Greece, with below-freezing temperatures and snowfall in many parts of the country, including the capital Athens and many Aegean islands.

Authorities have warned the public to limit their movements outdoors to the essential on Monday and Tuesday, while schools in many areas were shut. Government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou said more than 46,000 [school classes](#) across the country were being held online.

The [snow](#) was coming down thick and fast in central Athens, settling on the marble columns of the ancient Acropolis. Authorities sent out emergency alerts to cell phones in the wider Athens area on Monday morning warning of severe snowfall over the next few hours and calling on people to avoid any unnecessary movement. Snow chains were mandatory for cars in parts of the northern fringes of the capital, and trucks were banned from circulation.

The health ministry announced that COVID-19 vaccination centers in the wider Athens region of Attica and on the nearby island of Evia would shut at 3 p.m. Monday and would remain closed on Tuesday because of the heavy snowfall. Appointments that had been arranged for Monday afternoon and for Tuesday would be rescheduled.



A woman with an umbrella stands as at the background is seen the ancient Parthenon temple during a snowfall, in Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. AP Photo/Michael Varaklas)



A man walks during a snowfall north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



A member of the Greek Presidential guard stands at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier outside the Greek parliament during a snowfall on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. AP Photo/Michael Varaklas)



People walk in the middle of the street during snowfall in Agios Steganos, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



A snow plow vehicle removes snow from a street in Agios Steganos, north of Athens ,on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022.The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



A man shovels a pavement during a snowfall in Agios Steganos, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



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Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



A woman with an umbrella walks during a snowfall in Agios Steganos, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



People walk during snowfall in Agios Steganos, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



Cars drive on a high way during a snowfall, north of Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



A member of the Greek Presidential guard wipes at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Greek parliament during a snowfall , in Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. AP Photo/Michael Varaklas)



A pedestrian walks during a snowfall, in Athens, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. The wave of bad weather hitting Greece is forecast to continue through Tuesday, and has seen snow falling even on some islands. Authorities have warned the public to avoid all but essential outdoor movement, and several major roads and highways are passable only with snow chains. AP Photo/Michael Varaklas)

Oikonomou said conditions would continue to be "difficult" on Tuesday. Civil protection authorities have set up coordination centers with the participation of the fire department, police, the [armed forces](#) and [local authorities](#) to tackle any potential problems, he said.

Snow is common in the Greek mountains and in the northern part of the country, but is more infrequent in central Athens and on Aegean islands. Last year, the Greek capital was hit by a major snowstorm that caused

severe problems, knocking out power for days in certain neighborhoods and making all streets impassable without snow chains. Thousands of trees buckled and fell from the weight of the snow.

In neighboring Albania to the north, all elementary and high schools closed for three days this week because of cold weather. Authorities advised people to avoid driving as freezing temperatures hit across the country.

Temperatures reached -17 C (about 1 F) in eastern Albania, isolating some areas and causing problems to the electricity and water supply. Many rural roads have been blocked.

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