

Travel chaos as US northeast hit by snowstorm

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The northeastern United States was engulfed by snow Tuesday as a powerful winter storm battered the region, blanketing New York for the

first time in two years and causing flight cancellations and school closures.

Airlines cancelled more than 1,220 flights, including 43 percent of flights at New York's domestic LaGuardia airport as well as one in five flights at the city's main air hub JFK, according to aviation tracker Flight Aware.

Schools were forced to close in New York city and transport operators scrambled to provide service after authorities called on the public to avoid driving amid treacherous conditions.

It was the first time in two years that enough snow had fallen to necessitate the use of plows in the country's biggest city, authorities said.

"Four to eight inches (10-20 centimeters) of snow and wind gusts up to 40 miles (64 kilometers) per hour expected. Avoid unnecessary travel. If you must travel, use mass transit," the city's emergency notification system said in an alert.

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More than 32 million people were under a winter storm warning, issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) as Storm Lorraine wrought havoc.



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Snow storms in the US northeast can snarl air travel as well as bring treacherous conditions to normally busy roads.

Many rural areas in the northeast were cut off as snow plows attempted to clear roads even as heavy snow continued to cover driving surfaces.

Hampton Township in New Jersey was hammered with 13 inches of snow while Chester in upstate New York received over 11 inches, according to meteorologists.

"A Nor'easter will bring strong winds and heavy snowfall... which could damage trees, power lines, and disrupt travel. Coastal flooding is expected along portions of the East Coast," the NWS said in an update, using an informal name for the regional storm.

"The axis of heaviest snowfall is expected from eastern Pennsylvania, including the Lehigh Valley, through northern New Jersey, far southeast New York, and southern New England" including the New York metropolitan area.

"This heavy snow is expected to produce locally significant travel disruptions."

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