

## Historic storm leaves thousands in the cold

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Published: Monday, October 31, 2011 2:33 PM EDT

A catastrophic, historic October nor'easter dumped as much as 18 inches of snow across the state over the weekend, wreaking havoc as trees and limbs still laden with autumn leaves snapped, falling onto homes, cars, and power lines and causing a record number of outages — more than 830,000 at the height of the storm.

One person died in a car accident in Hebron as the storm raged on Saturday and four people nearly died in East Hartford due to carbon monoxide poisoning, officials said.

Hundreds of thousands of residents spent Sunday night in the dark with no power or heat as temperatures plummeted into 20s while others piled into emergency shelters.

In East Hartford there were eight separate incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning during the storm where four people nearly died because kerosene heaters and generators in use were not properly ventilated, Lt. Curtis Stoldt, spokesman for the East Hartford Police Department said today.

Schools across the state were closed today and towns opened emergency shelters but many roads remained impassable due to downed trees and power lines. In hard hit areas trees lay precariously on power lines that swooped over roadways just above the roofs of cars. In addition to power lines, phone service in many towns was impacted, with landlines not working and cell towers out of service.

With today being Halloween state and local officials are urging parents to keep children home and forgo trick-or-treating this year due to dangerous conditions.

The magnitude of the storm caught many unprepared, as evidenced by the long lines of cars at gas stations that still had power — and gas.

At some stations the long lines of customers caused such traffic tieups that police were called in to keep order as some motorists tried to cut in line and tempers flared.

As of this morning, more than 750,000 Connecticut Light & Power customers were still in the dark, Katie Blint, a CL&P spokeswoman, said.

Blint said that more than 300 crews have been working through the night and 140,000 customers have been restored since Sunday.

"We have requested another 600 crews from as faraway as California and British Columbia," Blint said. "We are flying them in."

As far as damage and outages, the nor-easter surpassed Tropical Storm Irene, which ravaged the state just two months ago on Aug. 28, because it knocked 41 transmission lines out of service and 21 of them need to be energized to restore power to substations, Blint said.

The northwest and north central parts of Connecticut — all CL&P territory — were hit the hardest, she said.

## Manchester

Power was on in the Buckland Hills mall area, which was inundated Sunday with shoppers anxious to find propane, wood, fireplace screens, or outdoor grills — and gas for their cars and generators.

A line of motorists extended out from every gas station throughout the day, creating traffic problems.

More than 150 Manchester residents sought shelter at the town Senior Center Saturday night, overcrowding the former elementary school.

A new shelter opened Sunday at Manchester High School that could hold more people. There, people can take a hot shower, charge their cell phones and laptops, cook a hot meal in the kitchen, or sleep in warmth.

Officials said that the number of people seeking shelter grew to 188 by Sunday night.

Trees took down a number of power lines in Manchester, leaving thousands of homes cold and dark, as well as blocking streets.

Deputy Fire Chief David Billings said that about 15 houses in town had

structural damage from falling trees.

The town had no storm-related deaths, officials said, but a number of medical calls came in, particularly from patients dependent on oxygen who had to be taken to the hospital when their tanks ran dry and backups weren't delivered in time to replace them.

Billings said the damage from fallen trees and large limbs was widespread, and hit every corner of town.

Town Hall was open today despite the huge oak tree on the front lawn that split in half.

Billings said that CL&P was in the process of restoring power, and residents should leave downed tree limbs alone if they are tangled with power or cable lines.

"We have no idea when that power kicks back on, or if someone in the neighborhood has a generator, power could kick back along the line," which could electrocute anyone cutting the tree, he said. "You're better off to wait for the utility crews, who are working with the tree removal companies."

Public works crews are also waiting to remove trees from the roads until CL&P gives them the go ahead that the lines are safe and disconnected, Billings said, adding: "It could be a really long haul — the damage in town is so much worse than it was for Irene."

As for Halloween trick-or-treating tonight, Spadaccini said that parents should decide whether to allow their children to go out but cautioned them to avoid any areas that are dark or have fallen trees or power lines in the streets or sidewalks — which is most of the town.

"I'm going to let people make their own decision, but I'd discourage it," he said.

Anyone needing assistance with getting to the shelter due to disability or if they have any storm-related questions, can call the Town Hall Customer Service Center at 860-647-5235

On Sunday afternoon, the lights in downtown Manchester were out, but there were a few bright spots to be found.

Manchester Hardware had no electricity — but it did have a calculator, a cash drawer that could open, and, most importantly, batteries for sale.

Some sizes at least. Blister packs of C and A batteries hung on a rack near the cash register, although their numbers were dropping. The store was sold out of the more powerful D batteries.

At the corner of Main and Forest streets, a line of customers waited at a hot dog cart.

"Food," grinned a man with an armload of foil-wrapped packages. "Hot food."

Wendy Skeen of Manchester was among those waiting in line. "Not many places are open," she said.

Shannon Duverger of Manchester said she'd lost power around 4:15 Saturday afternoon. She said she'd driven around Manchester and East Hartford on Sunday.

"Tried to get a cup of coffee," she said. "Nothing's open."

Those places in most of town that were open often were, like Manchester Hardware, doing what they could without electricity.

Stores and restaurants in the Buckland area were open Sunday, but with no electricity to power the traffic lights, getting there was impossible, Skeen said.

"You can't get through the intersections," she said.

Stoplights were out at most intersections in the center of Manchester on Sunday afternoon, and drivers patiently took turns going through. Many side streets were blocked by downed trees or wires — sometimes both. Wires were down in at least three places on a short stretch of Parker Street between East Center Street and Green Road.

By this morning, the traffic lights in the Center of town, at Main and Center streets, were back on, and signals worked on East Center Street, although the south end of downtown was still dark.

East Hartford

In East Hartford, 98 percent of the town was without power this morning, Timothy Bockus, interim public works director, said.

One of the hardest hit areas was Oak Street, between Silver Lane and Forrest Street, he said.

"We had to push the debris off to the side of the road, so people could get through," he said. "At the peak, we had 276 wires, trees, branches, and snapped poles, blocking streets in town."

East Hartford Emergency Management Coordinator Daniel Dube said that Town Hall was opened Sunday night as an emergency shelter.

"It will close this morning and reopen again about 5 p.m.," Dube said. "We had 92 people use the shelter. South Windsor was gracious enough to take our overflow and we sent them to the high school there."

East Hartford Mayor Marcia Leclerc said residents can take a shower at the South Windsor shelter.

"I visited the shelter at the Town Hall and the residents expressed their gratitude and demonstrated their strength during this difficult time," Leclerc said.

School is closed today and Tuesday.

Enfield

In Enfield where 100 percent of households were still without power this morning, Mayor Scott R. Kaupin said John F. Kennedy Middle School on Raffia Road is open to residents seeking shelter, meals, and hot showers.

He said there are about 100 cots at the shelter, though they could go quickly. Even if the cots are filled, people are free to come and sleep on the floor, he said, adding that residents will need their own bedding and toiletries.

Enfield schools are closed today and Tuesday, and officials will decide this evening how long to keep them closed. Trash pickup has been delayed for at least two days and leaf pickup for at least a week.

Kaupin said officials are developing a plan for curbside yard waste pickup to help residents deal with the branches and downed trees, but for now residents can dump them at the transfer station free of charge.

Kaupin also asked that people reconsider their Halloween plans.

"We're highly suggesting that people do not trick or treat because of public safety concerns," he said, noting that with wires still down, "you never know what type of live wires you can have out there" once utility crews begin to restore power.

If residents have downed power lines on their property, Kaupin said they should call CL&P's emergency line. The number is 1-800-286-2000.

Kaupin said that as of Sunday night the number of roads closed due to downed trees, branches, and power lines was down to 22. Most of the major roads were open with the exception of the portion of Route 190 between George Washington Road and Middle Road, he said.

Several town supermarkets and larger retailers are open, though they're not selling perishable food items. He said, however, that he didn't know of any gas stations in town that are open.

Lt. William Lt. Pedemonti said the Enfield Police Department received roughly 800 calls for service over the weekend due to the storm.

"Our activities are pretty much weather-related," he said.

Thompsonville Assistant Fire Chief Paul Nabors said there are still a number of roads closed due to downed trees and wires.

Pedemonti urged residents to approach intersections as if they were four-way stops if traffic lights are not functioning.

Linda K. Bridge, executive director of the Enfield Food Shelf, said she has a "horrible feeling" about what will happen to her organization if power is not restored quickly.

"I don't even have a clue if we're going to be opening this week. I'm hanging in the air," she said. "We're all just kind of walking around in circles wondering what the heck we're going to do."

She said the meat in the Food Shelf's freezer is still frozen, but she doesn't know what will happen if power doesn't come back soon. She said she's expecting a shipment Tuesday of more food from Foodshare, the Hartford region's food bank, but she doesn't know if she'll be able to accept it with questions about continued power outages.

"If we don't get power, we're going to lose everything," said Priscilla Brayson, director of Enfield Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen.

She said she served 51 people on Sunday, making sandwiches and using a gas stove to heat up soup. She said the group is looking for someone to lend the use of a generator, which she said will allow the soup kitchen to function. In the meantime, she said she packed the refrigerator with food in an effort to save what they had.

#### South Windsor

South Windsor police said today that the emergency shelter at the high school is "filling up quickly" and the pet shelter is on 124 Sullivan Ave.

As of this morning 72 percent of South Windsor was without power, police added. School is closed today and Tuesday.

#### East Windsor

In East Windsor, 91 percent of the town was without power, and officials established several emergency shelters, police said.

A shelter for the elderly is located at the Park Hill Elderly and Disabled Housing Complex on Windsorville Road. The other shelter is located at the John F. Kennedy Middle School, Selectman Gilbert Hayes said.

"We are bringing in an portable generator to restore power at Town Hall," he said.

#### Hebron

Officials in Hebron opened a shelter at RHAM High School on Sunday around 5 p.m.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said four residents stayed the night, while around 70 came to use the showers.

"I can't believe we are doing this again," Therrien said. "Two months ago to the day of Hurricane Irene."

She said that with the low temperatures expected tonight the shelter would remain open for residents to warm and charge their cell phones.

At the height of outages on Sunday morning, 94 percent of residents were without power, Therrien said. As of this morning, 44 percent remained without power, though it had been restored to the downtown area, including

Town Hall, which is open and available for residents to charge devices.

Therrien said public works crews have been out assessing storm damage, but all of the roads were reported passable. No major damage to homes or town buildings were reported, she said.

Therrien said that there was a two-car accident on Saturday on Route 85 near the Company 2 firehouse that resulted in one fatality.

School is closed today but officials were undecided about Tuesday.

Hebron resident Robin Gerovitz, meanwhile, was telling customers at the Xtra Mart on Route 66 in Hebron that gas pumps were not working due to the power outage Sunday.

"It's amazing how many people stop to get gas when the pump's not working," she said.

Gerovitz also said she was "a little more mentally prepared" for the power outage after going without electricity for seven days in the wake of Hurricane Irene, but she still hopes to get power back sooner.

"I'm really dreading that," she said.

## Suffield

Suffield First Selectman Tom Frenaye estimated that at least 100 people sought refuge at an emergency shelter set up at Suffield High School, with more residents coming by to take hot showers and charge their cell phones.

The high school, located on Sheldon Street, will remain open for the foreseeable future as the town's emergency shelter.

Frenaye said the shelter will likely be open for a couple of days, adding that he expects schools to remain closed through at least Tuesday.

Frenaye also said the town will be receiving an additional 100 cots for the shelter today, and residents can also get meals at the high school.

He was among the officials urging parents to keep their children home this Halloween.

Residents looking for information on town services can call the emergency command center at 860-668-3886, while those with emergencies should still

call 911.

Somers

With power outages encompassing 100 percent of the town, Somers has canceled school for Monday and Tuesday, First Selectwoman Lisa Pellegrini said today.

She said she had a representative of Connecticut Light & Power Co. with her at the town's Emergency Operations Center, which is at the firehouse at 400 Main St. — and that they would be working on priorities for power restoration. Town Hall is closed because it lacks power.

The high school, on Vision Boulevard, has a generator, and the town opened a shelter there at 11:30 p.m. Saturday. Pellegrini said 12 people stayed there the first night and that an average of about 20 people have been there since.

But Pellegrini said many more people have been using the shelter for showers. She said people are asked to bring their own soap and shampoo. People who stay at the shelter are also asked to bring non-perishable food items.

Potable water is available to residents at the firehouse at 400 Main St. It can be used both for drinking and for flushing toilets, Pellegrini said.

The town's transfer station, on Egypt Road, will be open until further notice for free disposal of brush and other storm debris by Somers residents, Pellegrini said. Its hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The first selectwoman said the town has been so "totally devastated" by the storm that it will take residents some time to clean up.

She cautioned residents to drive carefully because traffic lights are still out on Main Street.

The town is being "very aggressive" about clearing roads so that CL&P employees can get in to restore power, she said.

The town has established a "call center" for residents to call with any questions. The number is 860-749-7626. In emergencies, residents should call 911, as usual.

"You go down the street, and we have some beautiful, beautiful landscaping, and it's just been devastated," Pellegrini said.

After working in the Emergency Operations Center from 4 p.m. Saturday, the first selectwoman added, she got home at 7:30 p.m. Sunday and "I didn't know which driveway was mine."

As to Halloween, the first selectwoman stopped short of proclaiming a cancellation of the holiday, as Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has authorized mayors and first selectmen to do.

"That sounds horrible," she said. "It's like the Grinch that stole Halloween."

She urged parents to use good judgment based on conditions in their neighborhoods. But, in much of the town, she stressed, it is "extremely dangerous" to be out on the roads, between downed wires, downed trees, and poor visibility.

Pellegrini said she was encouraging people to postpone the holiday, possibly until Saturday.

That day, she said, town employees will offer trick or treating for kids at the town's shelter at the high school. In that event, which had originally been planned for today at Town Hall, children are asked to bring a small donation to the town's emergency fuel fund or a canned food item for the food bank.

#### Andover

Sylvia Dake, the town's emergency management coordinator, said Town Hall will be open until 4 p.m. for residents to warm up and charge their electronic devices.

She said there is a limited supply of water and ready-to-eat meals available that are left over from Tropical Storm Irene. Dake said there are around 100 beds at RHAM High School if residents need to spend the night somewhere warm.

Residents can call Town Hall at 860-742-7305 or the Andover Fire Department at 860-742-7477 for information on shelters or to report any damage.

#### Windsor

As of 7 p.m. Sunday, 105 residents were using the emergency shelter at the

L.P. Wilson Center at 599 Matianuck Ave, Mayor Donald Trinks said.

Trinks said the Wilson section of town has power, but everything north of Interstate 291 still has no electricity.

"It's like a war zone," Trinks said. "I was driving Sunday and was dodging fallen branches and limbs."

Pitkin Street had a large tree that was uprooted, falling across the road, blocking access to the high school, Trinks said.

"It was a big deal trying to get gas," Trinks added. "There were no gas stations with power."

School was canceled in Windsor today but officials were unclear about Tuesday.

#### Tolland

Tolland High School opened today as a shelter and showering facility. Residents are asked to bring their own supplies for showers. Charging stations and water are also available.

People who plan to stay overnight are asked to call 860-871-3677 or 860-870-3734 to help authorities make plans. Bring your own air mattress, pillows, and blankets if possible because supplies are limited.

Pets are not allowed at the shelter. If you need help making arrangements for pets, call 860-871-3676.

Nonpotable water is available at the fire station at 3 Rhodes Road and at the Senior Center, 674 Tolland Stage Road. Bring your own containers.

Officials recommend that children skip trick-or-treating. Parents who do take children out should use extreme caution due to downed wires and slippery conditions.

#### Vernon

In Vernon, the storm began with a major gas leak and evacuations when a tree fell on a gas main on Old Town Road, "and just sheared the pipe right in half," Emergency Management Director Michael Purcaro said. "We were one of the first towns to open a shelter, and that was in response to that incident."

Approximately 120 residents spent the night at the shelter at Vernon Center Middle School and many more have been filtering through to warm up, grab a bite to eat, shower, and charge electronics.

The Vernon Police Department has received over 2,000 phone calls since Saturday, and Lt. Mel Hardy asked that residents call police only to report an emergency. Do not call the police department for weather and power updates, school openings, or the hours for the shelter, Hardy said.

Residents seeking shelter at VCMS are welcome to bring pets, but are asked to bring crates, food, and other necessary supplies. Animal Control Officer Craig Segar is at the shelter and Purcaro said they've already housed seven dogs and one pet rat so far.

Schools are closed today and Tuesday, and Purcaro said the shelter will remain open continually as long as there's a need.

In addition to the early gas leak, emergency crews responded to a couple of structure fires, multiple car accidents, and a lot of injuries, but no deaths have been attributed to the storm in Vernon, Purcaro said.

The generator at the Water Pollution Control Authority's sewage-treatment plant caught fire with a nearly 5,000-gallon container of diesel fuel nearby, Purcaro said, and the storm has created many such dangerous situations for cleanup crews and town workers.

The Emergency Operations Center received close to 400 service calls due to the storm, and the town has a liaison from Connecticut Light & Power to help facilitate cleanup, but Purcaro said there are still multiple road closures and the situation isn't expected to improve any time soon.

Rockville General Hospital was on generator power for the duration of the storm, but electricity was restored as of 2 a.m. today, Purcaro said. CL&P has restored power to the town's other two high priority areas, a major high voltage line that went down down on Center Road and the sewage treatment plant, Purcaro said.

While municipal crews have been clearing debris, Purcaro said it's too dangerous for town workers to clear obstructions that have power lines involved.

"We've got one CL&P truck working with us, and we've got hundreds of locations that need to be addressed, so it's going to be a slow process,"

Purcaro said.

Residents who want to dump tree limbs and storm debris can bring it to the Horowitz Pool area of Henry Park and trash and recycling pickup will not begin until Thursday.

Many residents are using generators, and Purcaro urged extreme caution, as electricity may back-feed into downed power lines.

"The real difference here between Irene and the snowstorm, is you could see the power lines in many cases with Irene. But here we've got snow, and it's deep snow," Purcaro said. "Just be mindful that there may be power lines buried under the snow that you might not be able to see. Assume they're live and just avoid any lines."

Keep generators outdoors and be mindful of carbon monoxide, he added.

In terms of Halloween celebrations, "we're not telling people not to trick or treat, but use good sense and judgment," Purcaro said. Parents are urged to stay with children if they do go out, and be extremely careful as snapped power lines are still draped across many driveways and front yards.

The hunt for gasoline has been intensifying since the storm began, and Purcaro said he waited an hour for fuel Sunday at the gas station formerly known as Famous Johnnie's, at the intersection of West Street and Union Street.

When waiting in line, "please be patient," Purcaro said. "This is a difficult time for everybody, there's obviously a lot of tension. We've had to send police to a couple locations because people are just becoming impatient and frustrated."

While few people sought shelter after Hurricane Irene, "we've got people coming to the shelter from all walks of life," Purcaro said. "It's freezing cold out there and people want to stay warm and get some food."

Early Sunday, pedestrians in the downtown Rockville area of Vernon were streaming into the Rockville Corner Market on West Main Street, the only shop open within several blocks. But the store was without power and taking cash only, forcing individuals on food stamp benefits to look elsewhere for supplies.

Food stamp benefits are distributed through Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, and state Department of Social Services spokeswoman Kathleen

Kabara said today that there is no way for stores to track those benefits without an electronic card swipe machine.

"If there isn't power, there's no way to assess if there's money, similar to a debit card," Kabara said. "In order to be able to use it, they have to find something that has power."

Stafford

Town officials are staffing an emergency shelter and helping to provide meals to keep residents warm and fed while the town is completely out of power, First Selectman Michael P. Krol said today.

Many workers are being sent to assist with Meals on Wheels and congregate meals for the elderly, as well as at Stafford Middle School, 21 Levinthal Run, where an emergency shelter has been set up.

Town Hall offices and personnel are relocating to the Community Center, 3 Buckley Highway, which has a generator.

The middle school shelter opened Sunday night and will be open 24 hours until power is restored, Krol said. Workers are attempting to provide two hot meals per day for lunch and dinner.

Showers will also be available. Residents in need of shelter should bring bedding, pillows, and toiletries, Krol said. While officials are attempting to locate more cots, many people will have to sleep in chairs or on the floor, he said.

Krol said the town is preparing to be without power for a week or more.

While emergency personnel have cleared many trees from the roadways, downed power lines still litter many roads, and most roads are down to one open lane, Krol said.

He advises residents to stay off the roads at night, avoid any power lines, and conserve gasoline, as no gas stations in town are open.

Both the Big Y supermarket, 87 West Stafford Road, and the Stafford Food Center, 37 West Main St., are open and operating on generator power. The Beehive food truck, 55 West Stafford Road, is also operating and serving hot meals, Krol said.

Halloween trick-or-treating is officially canceled, Krol said. With no working

streetlights, the town is too dark for children to safely navigate, he said.

Krol also said the damage from the storm is the worst he's ever seen.

## Ellington

With 98 percent of the town out of power, officials are attempting to help residents stay safe and warm, First Selectman Maurice W. Blanchette said today.

Ellington High School, located at 37 Maple St., has been transformed into an emergency shelter, beginning at 10 p.m. Saturday night and staying open as long as it as needed.

The shelter will try to provide people with a cot, blanket, and pillow, Blanchette said, but officials are expecting to be overwhelmed as power outages drag on. Showers are also available at the school, but people should bring all necessary supplies from home, including food and toiletries.

Due to limited space and supplies, officials are only recommending the shelter to those who absolutely need it, including the elderly and disabled citizens, Blanchette said.

The high school only has generator power so while the building looks vacant, residents seeking shelter should enter through the front doors.

The Big Y supermarket, located at 135 West Road, has limited generator power, and remains open for residents to purchase essentials, including nonperishable food, Crystal Lake Fire Department Capt. Paul Secker said.

Secker said he doesn't know of any open gas stations in Ellington, but people needing to fuel up their cars can go to Route 83 along the Vernon-Manchester town line where several stations are open. Long lines are to be expected, Secker said.

The Crystal Lake firehouse is also running on limited generator power, and Secker said people have stopped by to warm up, get water, and charge their cell phones.

While roads have been extensively cleared since the storm, residents should remain cautious and assume any downed power lines are live, Secker said, adding that the Fire Department has responded to several calls of vehicles caught in power lines.

People should drive slowly, avoid driving under any low hanging wires or tree branches, and stay off the roads at night, Blanchette said.

Blanchette is also asking trick-or-treaters to stay home tonight. "Unfortunately, we don't see a way (Halloween) can happen without great issues of safety," he said.

Anyone with an "absolute, true emergency" should still dial 911, Blanchette said, but all "non life-threatening emergencies" should be directed to the emergency call center at 860-870-3178.

## Bolton

Schools were closed in Bolton today and may be for some time, School Superintendent Paul K. Smith said.

"We're just taking it one day at a time," he said, noting the large number of impassable roads in town due to downed trees and power lines.

Town Administrator Joyce Stille said that a fourth of all the roads in town — about 25 — were closed due to debris with many more near impassable. Bolton was 100 percent without power as of this morning.

Stille said that Town Hall would be open as a warming station and meals provided from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for residents, then Herrick Park would be open as a shelter for the evening hours.

Residents should bring their own bedding, some identification, medications, personal care items, and towels. There are no showers, but residents can wash up there. Herrick Park would close in the morning and Town Hall warming station would reopen, she said.

Residents should consider all downed power lines to be live and unsafe, she warned

As for Halloween, Stille was recommending that it's not safe in Bolton due to the larger number of downed lines and trees.

Little goblins who want to trick-or-treat can go to Town Hall between 5 and 7 p.m. to get candy, however, she said.

There are no working phones or Internet at Town Hall, but residents can charge their cell phones or lap tops there.

"We've got this down to a science," she said, noting the last long power outage with Hurricane Irene.

Anyone needing help or information can call Stille's cell phone at 860-604-9720