

Dangerous Nor'easter Wallops East Coast With Wind, Snow and Rain

 [nytimes.com/2018/03/01/us/noreaster-riley-storm-march.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/01/us/noreaster-riley-storm-march.html)

By Matt Stevens

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([Follow along here](#) for live updates on Friday's storm.)

A sprawling winter storm barreled toward the Atlantic Coast on Thursday and was expected to pound most of it with a potent mix of rain, snow, gusty winds and storm surge that forecasters warn could flood neighborhoods, knock out power and destroy homes.

"Take this storm seriously!" the National Weather Service's Boston branch warned on Twitter late Thursday afternoon. "This is a LIFE & DEATH situation for those living along the coast."

The effects of the nor'easter, which could linger through Saturday or beyond, are expected to stretch as far south as Georgia and South Carolina, all the way north to Maine. Weather officials say 10 inches of snow — or perhaps more — could blanket parts of New York; some areas of New England could get three to four inches of rain; and some coastal towns are expected to be hit with winds of 50 miles per hour or more.

Alerts have been issued up and down the coast, but Kim Buttrick, a meteorologist at the Weather Service's office in Taunton, Mass., said the state's east coast — from Cape Ann south to Cape Cod and Nantucket — was expected to experience some of the most severe flooding.

The Weather Service said roads, basements and other structures in those areas could become inundated by three feet of water or more, adding that the most severe coastal flooding was likely to occur during the high tides Friday night and Saturday afternoon.

“There could be casualties if people don’t heed the advice of town officials,” Ms. Buttrick said.

“This storm has the markings of setting records,” she added. “The anticipated coastal flooding could change the topography of coastal communities.”

The dire messages prompted Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York to activate the State Emergency Operations Center on Thursday. Also Thursday, Gov. Charlie Baker of Massachusetts said he had called in the National Guard, noting that the flooding in his state was predicted to be even more severe than what occurred during a storm in January.

“Do not ride out the storm if you are told to evacuate,” he said at a news conference.

The Jan. 4 storm gained much attention in part because some meteorologists described it as a “bomb cyclone.” (The name essentially derives from how quickly the barometric pressure falls.) Meteorologists say the pressure in the center of this weekend’s storm will plummet so fast that it, too, is likely to become a bomb cyclone.

The expected conditions are so worrisome that some airlines, like Delta and Southwest, have put out warnings about the weather’s impact on flights and are allowing travelers to change their Friday and Saturday reservations.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said on Thursday that it had taken “significant measures” to prepare for the storm. Officials plan to provide busing in the event that service on AirTrain Newark or AirTrain JFK is suspended because of high winds. And at La Guardia Airport, employees have secured the cranes and other construction equipment that was being used as part of a redevelopment program. They say they will redeploy it as needed.

Ms. Buttrick said the storm was essentially an area of low pressure that was moving northeast — strengthening and spiraling before it comes to a halt for about two days.

While the system spins north, the strong winds will whip out around it, Ms. Buttrick said, churning up the seas and adding to the conditions that, along with “astronomically high tides” and other factors, could create the catastrophic flooding.

Winter Storm Pounds Northeast With Wind, Snow and Flooding

Jan. 4, 2018

Image