

New England blizzard blamed for numerous deaths

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31 January 2015

Reports are beginning to surface of deaths that have so far been attributed to the storm that dumped record levels of snow across much of New England this week.

Reuters reported that 84-year-old Olive Dupuis was found unresponsive next to her car Thursday morning near her home in Salem, north of Boston. Police attributed her death to sub-freezing temperatures and snow.

In Yarmouth on Cape Code, 97-year-old Richard MacLead was found dead in deep snow next to his home, near a carbon dioxide exhaust vent on the side of his home Wednesday.

The man's son had asked police to look for him when he realized he was missing. Police believe MacLead died when he was trying to clear the vent during the snowstorm. Yarmouth officials said that their snow plow-equipped pickup trucks weren't big enough to remove the two- to four-foot snowdrifts and plow residential streets.

A 53-year-old man reportedly collapsed and died in New Bedford, Massachusetts, while shoveling snow Tuesday night. Earlier in the week, an 80-year-old man died while shoveling snow in Connecticut, and a teenager was killed after crashing into a lamppost on Long Island while he was snowtubing with friends. In Providence, a man and his two small children were hospitalized with suspected carbon monoxide poisoning after drifting snow covered a boiler vent on their home.

A house fire where a person died in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston early Thursday morning is not being linked to the storm, but snow hindered firefighters as they arrived on the scene. Firefighters confronted narrow streets with over four feet of snow plowed to each side. The two-alarm fire started at 6 a.m. and firefighters arrived on the scene after neighbors called 911. Some neighbors had been trying

desperately to wake Elizabeth Adams, 62, who was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital.

Boston Fire Department spokesman Steve MacDonald said officials were still investigating the cause of the fire. When firefighters made it into the two-story house they found heavy smoke and fire climbing inside the walls. The woman was rushed out of the house and down the street into a waiting ambulance, MacDonald said.

It was reported that firefighters had to shovel out hydrants on the street, but MacDonald said the snow did not impair the response to the fire. Each fire truck has had an extra person working on it since the beginning of the storm, he said, to help with snow-related issues.

He went on to urge residents to shovel out nearby hydrants, and make sure the hookup that faces the street is completely cleared. Like other cities, Boston has steep fines for failing to clear sidewalks, up to \$100 for residential and \$200 for commercial properties. With snowfalls of up to three feet however, keeping sidewalks clear is easier said than done. No sooner is the shoveling finished than a snowplow comes along and fills the sidewalk up again.

Dorchester is among the poorest neighborhoods in Boston and as such will be way down the list of priorities for snow removal. A 2011 poverty report identified "concentrated need" in Dorchester, and the Mattapan and Roxbury neighborhoods. The study found 42 percent of children live in poverty, the densest cluster of childhood poverty in the state. In those neighborhoods, 85 percent of families are headed by a single parent, mainly mothers, and at least 20 percent of the adults have no high school diploma.

A 2013 report released by the Boston Public Health Commission, cites North Dorchester and Roxbury as

having the highest percentages of child poverty, with 39.2 percent and 46 percent respectively.

While businesses are required to clear the sidewalk adjacent to their properties, many do not clear pathways at busy junctions with four- or five-foot snow mounds built up through plowing. City workers are mobilized to clear the financial districts and downtown Boston but neighborhoods are left to fend for themselves. As public schools reopen, residents are concerned for the safety of schoolchildren who are forced step into the road at intersections to get onto the cleared sidewalks. Similarly, while public transit has resumed operation, bus stops remain clogged with snow.

The financial cost of the storm is still being calculated, but Gov. Charlie Baker has said it is expected to compare with that of Winter Storm Nemo in 2013, for which Massachusetts shelled out between \$20 million and \$30 million. Baker hopes to devise a plan in order to receive federal relief aid, although that could take several weeks and will most likely not cover snow removal costs.



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