

Office of Risk Management

RISK ALERT

No. 2018-05

RE: Blizzard Warning - Prepare for Heavy Snow and Power Outages

March 12, 2018

The National Weather Service has issued a Blizzard Warning and a Coastal Flood Warning for all of southern New England and the Massachusetts coast. The Warnings are in effect from today at 11:00 PM until March 13 at 8:00 PM. Blizzard conditions expected. Winds gusting as high as 65 mph will cause whiteout conditions in blowing snow. Significant drifting of the snow is likely.

Total snow accumulations of 10 to 18 inches with localized 20-inch amounts possible.

Travel will be very dangerous with 1 to 3-inch per hour snowfall rates at times and will significantly impact the morning commute. The Tuesday afternoon commute is also expected to be impacted. Wet snow and strong winds will result in some power outages and tree damage.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

A Blizzard Warning means severe winter weather conditions are expected or occurring. Falling and blowing snow with strong winds and poor visibilities are likely. This will lead to whiteout conditions, making travel extremely dangerous. Do not travel. If you must travel, have a winter survival kit with you. If you get stranded, stay with your vehicle.

- **Closely monitor NOAA weather radio or other local news outlets** for official storm information and changes to the forecast.
- Some trees in our area may be more susceptible to wind damage due to stress from drought conditions. **Immediately inspect trees and bushes. Remove dead or rotting branches that could fall and cause injury or damage.**
- **Be prepared for potential power outages** as a result of downed power lines caused by storm activity. Have an emergency supply kit on hand, including water, flashlight, extra batteries, a first aid kit and non-perishable food.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage to people/property.

Roofs

If not cleared off, snow accumulations will add weight and stress to structures and contribute to leaky roofs once the snow begins to thaw. In many cases, roof ice dams can form, causing water build-up leading to interior damage. To minimize the risk of over-stressing a building roof due to accumulated or drifting snow, please take into consideration the following tips:

- If roof snow can be removed from the ground with the use of a snow rake (available at most hardware stores), do so. Use caution, as metal snow rakes conduct electricity if they come into contact with a power line.

- Try to avoid working from ladders, as ladder rungs tend to ice up. Snow and ice collect on boot soles and metal ladders.
- Remove snow in layers uniformly across the roof to prevent unbalanced loads that might cause collapse. Avoid making snow piles on the roof during the removal process.
- Large icicles can form on roof overhangs, but do not necessarily mean ice damming is occurring. Icicles overhanging doorways and walkways can be dangerous and should be carefully removed.
- Use care with snow removal equipment (shovels, ice scrapers, snow blowers) to prevent roof cover damage. It is not necessary to clean completely down to the roof surface as long as melting snow and water can freely flow to the drains.
- Because snow is heavy and roofs and other surfaces may be slippery, all of the abovementioned actions should only be performed by able-bodied adults. Protective headgear and eye protection is recommended.

Property Damage

If you experience property damage, immediately call the Office of Risk Management at 617-746-5743. For a list of service vendors, go to: <http://rcabrisk.org/vendors>

RCAB Contact List: <http://rcabrisk.org/contact>

For updates, go to: <https://www.boston.gov/>