

New Year's Eve to usher in record cold for much of US



Photo: Frigid temperatures strike U.S.

Samantha Dement-Graham shovels her neighbor's sidewalk on University Avenue in Dubuque, Iowa, on Friday, December 29, 2017. Blasts of arctic air have brought weather-related deaths, record low temperatures and historic amounts of snowfall to parts of the United States.

(CNN) Out with the old, in with the record cold.

With much of the Midwest and Northeast already besieged by freezing temperatures, ice and snow, the weather is going from bad to worse — and spreading to the South — just as revelers get ready to ring in the new year.

As many as 27 record lows are expected to be set on New Year's Day, and 24 record lows for January 2 are possible Tuesday. That's on top of record lows set late this week, from Danville, Virginia, to Augusta, Maine.



People pose for photographs in front of a frozen water fountain at Bryant Park in New York on Thursday.

New Year's Eve is expected to be 20 to 40 degrees colder than usual across much of the US, forecasters say.

From Hettinger, North Dakota — where it was minus 37 degrees Sunday morning — and the Adirondacks of New York down to the very southern tip of Texas, more than 150 million people were under wind chill alerts in the US on Sunday morning, more than double yesterday's 70 million.

If the present forecast holds, this will be the third-coldest New Year's Eve ball drop in New York's Times Square since the event started in 1907. The expected low will be 9 degrees, with a wind chill of as much as minus 10 degrees, forecasters say.



DAVID PHOTOFEST/GETTY IMAGES

Jose Nieto uses a leaf blower to clear snow from the steps of a sick neighbor during a snowstorm Friday in Bloomington, Illinois.

Never mind, says New York Police Commissioner James O'Neill. "There's a lot of brave people in New York City and the United States," O'Neill told reporters this week. "So, I'm sure there'll still be millions of people in Times Square no matter how cold it gets."

Of the lower 48 states, only 10 aren't under a wind chill alert, and only two of those are east of the Rocky Mountains — Florida and South Carolina.

Southern regions unused to such temperatures could see some icy roads as an early morning hard freeze follows rain.

"it's going to be extra bad in the South, where they are not used to dealing with it," said CNN meteorologist Allison Chinchar.

Brownsville, Texas, on the southern border with Mexico could see wind chill in the 20s.



Pedestrians walk past the One Times Square building Saturday ahead of Sunday's New Year's Eve celebrations.

In Atlanta, which holds an annual Peach Drop, temperatures are predicted to dip to 22 degrees.

In Boston, forecasters predict a low of minus 1, with wind chill values as low as minus 7 degrees on New Year's Eve, and 2 degrees on the first day of the year. Mayor Marty Walsh urged residents to take precautions for the bitterly cold weather.

"In times like these, it's vital for residents to look out for one another, and I encourage all Bostonians to reach out to the City if they or their neighbors need help this winter season," he said in a statement.

The arctic front that hit earlier already has brutalized parts of the US. It was so cold in Massachusetts earlier this week that sharks were washing up on the shoreline of Cape Cod Bay, "likely stranded due to cold shock," the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy said.

In Rochester, New York, calls to AAA Roadside Assistance in the rural areas alone have surged because of snow, CNN affiliate Spectrum News Rochester reported.

"On a normal winter day in Rochester, we see about 300 calls in the metro area and much lower in the rural areas, said AAA Roadside Assistance Manager Mark Mika. This week that's changed. In the rural areas it has jumped considerably, almost to 600 calls in one day."

Beleagured Erie, Pennsylvania, has gotten more snow in December — 121.3 inches — than its average for an entire winter season, meteorologist Chinchar said. And the city is forecast to get as much as 6 additional inches in the next two days.

There's no light at the end of the snow tunnel for much of the US. Although it will get a few degrees warmer in the coming week, temperatures are expected to drop again late in the week.

"It's not like this is going to end and it goes back to normal," Chinchar said.

But if you're looking to escape the cold, you could try the West, where places like Kingman, Arizona, are experiencing record highs. On Friday, more than 32 record highs were recorded, according to CNN meteorologists.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/31/us/new-years-eve-winter-weather/index.html>

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