

Ice Storm of 2008

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From the National Weather Service – Taunton, MA...

A destructive ice storm affected interior southern New England on 11-12 December 2008. Widespread ice accumulations of 0.50 to 1.00 inch, with locally up to 1.50 inches, were observed across interior portions of northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. The hardest hit areas in the WFO Taunton County Warning Area (WFO BOX CWA) were the higher terrain of north central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Large amounts of ice accumulated on wires and trees, resulting in numerous downed trees and power outages. The power outages were so extensive that it took weeks in some areas for power to be restored. Although the 1998 ice storm impacted a larger area from northern New England into southeast Canada, this event appears to have had a larger impact across the WFO BOX CWA.

This presentation will describe how several meteorological ingredients came together to produce a rare and destructive ice storm. Special focus is given to one of the more unusual aspects to this storm. In most cases when rainfall rates are high, surface temperatures below 30F are required for a considerable amount of ice accretion and subsequent damage. In this event, heavy freezing rain produced significant icing with temperatures between 29F and 32F.

From National Grid...

National Grid initiated its Emergency Restoration Plan prior to the onset of the Ice Storm of 2008. The company pre-staged personnel and resources in areas forecast to be impacted most severely by the accretion of ice. Upon the storm's impact, National Grid ramped up its emergency operations, secured hundreds of supplemental crews from mutual aid utilities and outside contractors throughout the US and responded swiftly and aggressively to restore electric service to customers impacted by the ice storm.

At the height of the storm, a peak of 550,000 customers were interrupted, throughout all of National Grid's US territory. While enduring precarious conditions, the people of National Grid worked methodically to prioritize the damage and restore service to customers in an expedient manner. A significant team of behind-the-scenes employees supported the front lines throughout the event. In total, over 7,400 employees participated in the restoration process. Customers and government agencies expressed gratitude and complimented National Grid for an impressive response to the ice storm.

From the U.S. Department of Agriculture...

Ms. Sullivan will discuss the Agriculture and Natural Resources Emergency Support Function (ESF # 11) response to the December, 2008 ice storm and debris issues complicated by the Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation in Worcester County.

From the North Shore Skywarn Team...

A video slide show will be shown, showcasing amateur radio's role in collecting disaster intelligence during the Ice Storm. This information was fed directly to the National Weather Service in Taunton. This video can be viewed online at: <http://video.nsradio.org> .

PRESENTERS' BIOS

Joe DelliCarpini is the Science and Operations Officer at the National Weather Service in Taunton, MA. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Meteorology from the State University of New York at Oswego in 1991. His career with the National Weather Service began as a Student Trainee in Boston before going to the Binghamton, NY office as a Meteorologist Intern. He returned to Southern New England in 1996 as a Hydrologic Forecaster at the Northeast River Forecast Center in Taunton, before heading back to the Weather Forecast Office as both a General Forecaster and a Senior Forecaster. Joe lives in Norwood, MA with his wife, Kelly, and their two children, Jessica and Jason.

Bob Kearns is the Director of Emergency Planning at National Grid. His responsibilities include preparing the company's U.S. operations to respond effectively to major electric system emergencies and storms, as well as a variety of business continuity threats, such as facility disasters and pandemic influenza. Bob received a Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Manhattan College in 1986. He has 23 years of experience in all aspects of electric utility system design, construction, operation and emergency response. Over Bob's career, he has managed the company's response to a variety of major storms, ranging from Hurricane Bob in 1991 to the Ice Storm of 2008. Bob is presently embracing the opportunity to integrate a variety of emergency plans that existed within National Grid's legacy companies – into one universal set of emergency plans, incorporating the Incident Command System (ICS), for all of National Grid, U.S.

Christine Sullivan is the Emergency Support Function # 11 Coordinator for Region I (New England). She was USDA's coordination lead to FEMA for ice storm response within the Asian Longhorned Beetle quarantine zone. Ms. Sullivan is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at both Amherst and Boston. She worked in emergency programs for the United States Coast Guard for 18 years before coming to USDA.

Jim Palmer is the Production Coordinator at Danvers Community Access Television where he has worked for several years helping Danvers residents create their own local television programming. He is a graduate of Emerson College in Boston, MA where he earned both a B.A. in the Television/Video Production and a Minor in Public Relations. He has earned several awards from the "Alliance for Community Media – Northeast Region" for projects created from showcasing the Danvers Police Department to producing DCAT's LIVE Election Night Coverage.

In his spare time, he is an avid Amateur Radio (Ham Radio) operator under the call-sign KB1KQW. He is currently the Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in Eastern Massachusetts and assists with providing emergency communications when all else fails. Recently, he spent several days coordinating emergency communications for the city of Gardner which suffered severe communications infrastructure damage during the December ice storm. Jim is also an enthusiastic weather spotter and coordinates weather spotters around the North Shore to provide real time severe weather information both to the National Weather Service offices in Taunton, MA and Gray, ME.

Jim is the Lead Advisor for Venturing Crew 47, a youth scouting unit in Peabody which specializes in Ham Radio. He earned his Eagle Scout award and proudly joined the Eagle Scout class of 1999, and currently serves as a counselor for several activity merit badges from Radio to Weather to Communications. Jim can be found working at numerous district and council events and proudly fulfilled the role of "Program Director" for Camp MoonRaker 2009 in Topsfield.