

Millions in path of deadly storm bringing fierce winds, blizzard conditions and tornado warnings

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A mammoth and multifaceted storm is slamming the eastern half of the United States with powerful winds, blizzard conditions and severe thunderstorms for the second consecutive day.

The near-record strong March storm reached the East Coast early Wednesday after delivering deadly thunderstorms and whipping up choking dust and [fast-spreading wildfires](#) in the central and southern US Tuesday. Here's the latest:

- **Potent thunderstorms reach the East:** Some storms prompted early morning severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings in parts of the Carolinas. These damaging storms continued to push east in the afternoon, reaching into Virginia. The threat for tornadoes and damaging winds will wrap up by Wednesday evening.
- **Storm turned deadly:** Five weather-related deaths have been reported this week. At least three people are dead in Mississippi after severe thunderstorms swept across the state on Tuesday. Madison County Coroner Alex Breeland told CNN one person was electrocuted and another died when a tree fell on a car. Another person died in Clarke County, according to the state's emergency management agency. In Nebraska, two people died after losing control of their vehicle amid Tuesday's winter weather, according to the state patrol.
- **Damage left behind:** Violent storms left a trail of damage behind in the South and Plains on Tuesday. An EF1 tornado tore through a community in Ada, Oklahoma, on Tuesday morning, according to the National Weather Service. Images on social media showed toppled structures and widespread destruction. Ada's tornado was one of at least eight EF1 tornadoes that hit parts of Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana. A warehouse partially collapsed near the Dallas area as thunderstorms also damaged roofs, tore down power lines and left debris scattered in nearby towns.
- **Widespread power outages:** The storm's powerful wind gusts, severe thunderstorms and snow have [knocked out power](#) in more than 20 states. More than 75,000 homes and businesses were still in the dark across the central US, the Southeast and parts of the Midwest Wednesday evening, down from a peak of more than 500,000, according to [PowerOutage.us](#). More than 37,000 of them were in Texas.
- **Airports report delays and cancelations:** More than 870 flights within, into or out of the US were canceled and nearly 5,000 flights were delayed Wednesday, according to flight tracking site [FlightAware](#).
- **Fires prompt evacuations in two states:** Dozens of fires broke out across Texas Tuesday amid a serious fire risk across a large portion of the state. The Welder Complex Fire erupted in Sinton Tuesday afternoon, burned multiple structures and forced evacuations, CNN affiliate [KRIS](#) reported. [Crews stopped forward progress](#) of the fire Wednesday and Sinton residents who

evacuated were allowed back to their homes. High winds in Atascosa County resulted in several house fires Tuesday afternoon, [law enforcement officials](#) said. The fire risk decreased on Wednesday but lingering strong wind could cause issues for any blazes in progress. Wildfires also prompted evacuations in Tennessee. Evacuations were lifted in [Sevier County](#) Wednesday morning and in [Monroe County](#) by the afternoon.

- **Blizzard conditions:** Blowing snow created whiteout conditions and snarled traffic in parts of Iowa and Nebraska Wednesday. On Tuesday afternoon, the same storm brought blizzard conditions to western Kansas, where the city of Hugoton recorded a wind gust of 93 mph.

- **Dust storms rage:** The sky over Dallas on Tuesday resembled a Martian landscape as winds kicked up red dust. It was the [second consecutive day](#) a disruptive dust storm raced through parts of the state.

Hazardous weather continues

The mid-Atlantic region will continue to see severe thunderstorms with damaging wind gusts through the afternoon before the storms largely push out over the Atlantic Ocean by the early evening.

Tornadoes will be possible until the line of violent storms moves off land. A few strong or severe thunderstorms could also develop in parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania through the evening.

The storm threat doesn't stop there.

Heavy rain will continue to drench areas north of where severe thunderstorms rumble. It isn't expected to cause widespread flooding concerns, but cities such as Philadelphia, New York City and Boston could see some flash flooding, especially in low-lying and poor drainage areas.

Strong wind gusts of 30 to 40 mph will blow over much of the eastern half of the US into Wednesday night. These persistent winds could hinder power restoration efforts or bring down additional trees and power lines.

Much of the storm's precipitation will come to an end Thursday, but gusty winds will persist in its wake.

Blizzard slams multiple states

Powerful winds combined with snow to wreak havoc in parts of Iowa and Nebraska late Tuesday and Wednesday. Gusts of 50 to 70 mph roared in both states Tuesday and Wednesday morning. Hazardous travel conditions remained in the afternoon even after the snowfall stopped.

The Iowa State Patrol warned travel Wednesday was "very dangerous." Crews responded to more than 100 crashes and assisted more than 400 motorists by the evening, according to the patrol.

Overnight, hundreds of vehicles were stranded on the interstate for hours in snowy conditions between Omaha, Nebraska, and Des Moines, Iowa State Patrol Trooper Rodney Larson told CNN.

Portions of Interstate 80 are "impassable," the Iowa Department of Transportation said Wednesday morning, warning motorists to avoid using these roadways. Part of Interstate 35 north of Des Moines also shut down Wednesday following a series of crashes amid whiteout conditions.

Neighboring Nebraska wasn't spared from the storm's chaos.

The two people killed in a crash lost control of their vehicle and struck a semi-truck on Interstate 80 near Grand Island, Nebraska, Tuesday afternoon, according to the Nebraska State Patrol. The driver of the semi was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

"Severe winter weather was a factor in the crash," the patrol noted in [a news release](#), adding the incident is still under investigation.

CNN's Robert Shackelford, Hanna Park, Joe Sutton, Gene Norman, Sara Smart, Karina Tsui, Zoe Sottile, Jeremy Grisham, Chris Boyette, Aaron Cooper and Dawn Sawyer contributed to this report.