December 2008 Ice Storm

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Photos from around the Region
How Many House Holds Effected?

- 550,000 National Grid customers lost power
- 40,000 Unitil customers lost power
- 322,000 Public Services of New Hampshire customers lost power
- 220,000 Central Maine Power customers lost power
- 1,132,000 households lost power in the Northeast not including the municipal providers
- Power outages lasted on average up to 4-5 days with some areas as much as two weeks!

Source: National Grid; Unitil: Individual electric companies
National Grid

- 4,000 different incidents of power damage
- 90 miles of new electrical wire run.
- 1,000 line and forestry crews brought in.
- 1,750 rooms in 46 hotels reserved.
- 970 vehicles used in the response
Unitil

- 100% of their Massachusetts customers were without power.
- Initially 200 workers in 100 trucks were deployed and peaked at 650 workers in 320 trucks.
- Unitil estimates that there was $10,000,000.00 in damages.
Sheltering

- 5,148 self reported to ARC assisted shelters, 4,800 in Central Mass alone.
  - Numbers compounded by Fires
- 47 shelters needing ARC assistance, 29 in Central Mass. Some communities opened multiple shelters
  - Worcester (3)
  - Leominster (3)
  - Fitchburg (2)
  - Gardner (2)
  - Holden (2)

### Finding shelter in Central Massachusetts

In the aftermath of one of the worst ice storms in memory, emergency shelters are opening across the region. Here’s a partial listing of shelters:

- **Auburn**
  - Auburn High School, Auburn Street
- **Ashburnham**
  - Oakmont Regional High School
- **Ashby and Townsend**
  - Hadlton Breck Middle School, 64 Breckline Road, Townsend
- **Barre**
  - Quabbin Regional High School, South Street
- **Charlton**
  - Senior Center, in the Town Hall, Main Street
- **Clinton**
  - The Clinton shelter at Turner Hall closed yesterday at 7 p.m. Anyone else needing a place to stay will be taken to Lancaster’s shelter at AUC.
- **Fitchburg**
  - Senior Center, 14 Wallace Ave.; Reingold Elementary School, 70 Reingold Ave.; Memorial Middle School, 615 Railroad St.
- **Gardiner**
  - Gardner Middle School, Catherine Street; National Guard Armory, West Broadway
- **Hancock**
  - Egan School, 495 Main St.
- **Harvard**
  - Beakfield School, 14 Massachusetts Ave.
- **Holden**
  - Senior Center, 1130 Main St., and Wachusett Regional High School, 1745 Main St.
- **Hubbardston**
  - Hubbardston Police Station, 7 Main St.; Quabbin Regional High School, 800 South St., Barre
- **Lancaster**
  - Atlantic Union College gymnasium, Main Street
- **Lunenburg**
  - Turkey Hill Middle School, 129 Northfield Road
- **New Braintree**
  - Town Hall, 100 Oakham Road
- **Orange**
  - Orange Armory, East Main Street
- **Oxford**
  - Oxford Senior Center, 323 Main St.
- **Paxton**
  - Anna Maria College Campus Center, 50 Sunset Lane
- **Princeton**
  - Thomas Prince School, 170 Sterling Road (Route 62)
- **Royalston**
  - Village School, Raymond Circle
- **Rutland**
  - Central Tree Middle School, 281 Main St.
- **Spencer**
  - Knox Trail Junior High School, 73 Asil St.
- **Sterling**
  - First Church in Sterling, 6 Meeting House Hill Road
- **Templeton**
  - Narragansett Middle School, 462 Baldwinville Road
- **Westminster**
  - Westminster Elementary School, 8 Academy Hill Road
- **West Boylston**
  - West Boylston Middle/High School, 125 Crescent St.
- **Witchendon**
  - Sudbury High School, Central Street
- **Worcester**
  - Senior Center, 128 Providence St.
Some shelters ran for entire duration - 12 days

19,874 meals were provided by ARC.
- 2 Fixed feeding sites (Ashby, Fitchburg)
- 3 Mobil feeding units dispatched throughout region.
Sheltering Issues

- Inadequate resources (cots, blankets)
- At Risk Population
  - Large elderly population in shelters. Large percentage O2 dependent.
  - Patients with Medical Care needs (colostomy, incontinence issues, basic care/feeding).
  - Group homes/elderly high rises/assisted living/nursing homes evacuated to some shelters (know your community).
- Inadequate medical staffing resources during some operational periods.
- Inadequate oxygen resources. O2 vendors backed up with emergency deliveries, unable to provide deliveries to shelters.
Sheltering Issues Cont’

- ARC does not provide medical care at shelters. Need to rely on local MRCs
- Long term discussion- Medical Shelters separate from general population shelters???
  - Many shelters sent medical needs individuals to local hospitals.
- No set command structure at many shelters which caused confusion and logistics issues
  - Personnel and equipment request went through different organizations.
  - Some shelters were contacting local hospitals for medical staffing.
- Food, music, and entertainment!
Communications

- Limited communications with hospitals and LPHD
  - Cell provider systems down (NEXTEL).
  - Poor reception, many lacked ability to charge cell phones that worked
  - Many phone lines down
- Reverse 911 systems down
- Sat phones worked!
- Local radio stations used (WTAG)
Hospital/Medical Surge

- 11 Hospitals in Central Mass
- Most were at or beyond surge capacity
- At beginning of event, all activated their hospital’s command center
- Staffing issues due to employees unable to commute to hospital
- Many staff unable to communicate with their hospital due to inoperable phone lines
Some local Health Centers shut down, increasing medical surge at EDs

02 dependent individuals self presenting to hospitals due to lack of power for concentrators.

Mass Feeding

Communications issues regionally due to phone lines inoperable, NEXTEL down, some HCC numbers changed, unknown status of some command centers
Hospital Cont

- When NEXTELs were operational, difficult to contact all hospitals using group connect.
- HHAN worked well (more updates via HHAN?)
- Bed reporting on website did not work well.
  - Led to difficulties in arranging transfers
- RMCC not opened due to staffing issues.
  - Possibly look to unaffected region to assume coordination.
Public Health Concerns

- Public Information
  - Cold weather care information
  - CO prevention information
  - FBI prevention information.

- Retail and food preparation inspections
  - Public Health mutual aid used

- Assisting communities with sheltering operations.

- Still not considered a first responder agency in some communities!!!
Medical Reserve Corps

- Central Region MRCs unable to respond.
  - Notification systems down
  - Impacted
- Other statewide MRCs able to assist
  - Over 220 volunteers assisted during the 12 days of sheltering operations. Many volunteers worked more than 1 shift!!
MRC Issues

- No single point of volunteer coordination.
  - Led to overstaffing/understaffing at some shelters.
- Recruitment freelancing
  - Just in time credentialing?
- Hospital staffing
  - Need to address hospital credentialing standards with MRCs.
Know your vendors!

- Fuel/ supplies
  - Some issues reported with getting fuel for generators.
  - Additional items needed for mass care (blankets, toiletries, diapers and wipes)
    - Wal*Mart
    - Grainger
Overall

- This storm, while predicted, caused significant unexpected damage.
- High impact/low mortality
- Tested every facet of planning we have been working on over the past 5 years (medical surge, mass feeding, mass sheltering, communication, at-risk populations, animal sheltering, mutual aid, Regional MRC activations)
- While the response was successful, it certainly highlighted the many areas that still need to be addressed.
Questions