

East Coast Begins to Pick Up Pieces After Fierce Winter Storm

By Christopher M. Matthews and Jon Ostrower

1 of 22 *fullscreen*

A man walks through the snow in the Glendale neighborhood of Queens. *Peter J. Smith for The Wall Street Journal*

A snowman sits on a snowbank on Monday in front of the White House, as the Washington, D.C., area cleaned up after the weekend snowstorm. *Brendan Smialowski/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Many streets in Wilmington, Del., remained snow covered Monday. The blizzard broke some snowfall records and caused flooding and ice in the Mid-Atlantic region. *Andrew Renneisen/Getty Images*

Workers clear tracks on the Port Washington branch of the Long Island Rail Road in New York. Service on many lines was fully restored, while others required additional work, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. *Kathy Kmonicek/Associated Press*

A snow crew dumps snow cleared from the White House grounds in front of the building in Washington, D.C. *Alex Wong/Getty Images*

Travelers wait in line to board an Amtrak train in New York City's Pennsylvania Station. The snowstorm crippled east coast railways, roads and airports, stranding travelers. *Andrew Burton/Getty Images*

A newly married couple walk in the snow in New York City. *Spencer Platt/Getty Images*

Rental cars are buried at a lot at Dulles International Airport, outside Washington, D.C., in Sterling, Virginia. *paul j. richards/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Jose Rodriguez shovels snow off a dock on the ice-choked James River near downtown Richmond, Va. *Steve Helber/Associated Press*

The morning commute was slushy and slow in New York City even though much of the city's transit system had been restored. *timothy a. clary/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Joggers run on 14th Street near U Street in Washington, D.C. *Pablo Martinez Monsivais/Associated Press*

Cars are buried in the snow in Union City, N.J. *Rickey Rogers/Reuters*

A worker clears snow from the Charging Bull sculpture at Bowling Green Park in lower Manhattan. *Beowulf Sheehan/Zuma Press*

Snow is cleared in the Upper West Side. *Craig Ruttle/Associated Press*

Snow is piled deep in Times Square. *Kena Betancur/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

A treacherous crossing, as parts of New York City began to thaw. *Kena Betancur/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Floodwaters surround a fence in Manasquan, N.J. The storm caused tidal flooding along the Jersey shore. *Dominick Reuter/Reuters*

Two men use snowshoes in Central Park. *Francois Xavier Marit/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Max Sorensen kayaks down Third Ave at 92nd Street in Stone Harbor, N.J. *Dale Gerhard/Press of Atlantic City/Associated Press*

Barbra and Moria Valcarcel dig out their car in the Woodhaven neighborhood of Queens. *Peter J. Smith for The Wall Street Journal*

People clear snow from parked cars on Henry Street in the Chinatown neighborhood of New York. *Peter Morgan/Associated Press*

People enjoy a sunny day in the snow in Prospect Park in Brooklyn. *Spencer Platt/Getty Images*

A man walks through the snow in the Glendale neighborhood of Queens. *Peter J. Smith for The Wall Street Journal*

A snowman sits on a snowbank on Monday in front of the White House, as the Washington, D.C., area cleaned up after the weekend snowstorm. *Brendan Smialowski/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images*

Updated Jan. 25, 2016 10:22 a.m. ET

Cities across a broad swath of the East Coast turned their efforts to digging out Sunday after a [crippling winter storm](#) that shut down air and road travel and claimed more than two dozen lives.

Carriers had canceled more than 12,000 flights from Friday to Tuesday, including more than 1,400 on Monday, according to flight-tracking website FlightAware.

While New York-area airports reopened with limited schedules, Newark Liberty International remained severely restricted as crews continued to clear snow, and almost half of Monday's flights have already been scrubbed. [United Continental Holdings](#) Inc., its largest operator, requested restrictions on flights, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Washington's two main airports were also open, though using a single runway apiece.

Related Video

Washington, D.C.'s mega snowball fight was held on Sunday as the city began to dig out from the winter storm Jonas, but it wasn't the first. Here's a look back at what's become a Dupont Circle tradition.

However, Tuesday cancellations stabilized below 200 in a sign that operations are slowly getting back to normal, with the bulk of the dropped flights involving regional connecting services and a handful of overseas carriers wary of starting long-haul flights that could be forced to make costly diversions to other airports.

Authorities reported at least 29 storm-related deaths, mostly from car crashes or snow shoveling, according to the Associated Press.

Glengary, W.Va., was covered with 42 inches of snow, according to the National Weather Service, while pockets of West Virginia and Virginia got more than 3 feet. New York City recorded 26.8 inches in Central Park, while Washington got 22.4 inches at the National Zoo.

After a record-setting snowstorm, cities across the eastern U.S. began to dig out on Sunday. Photo: AP/Jeff Taylor/The Winchester Star

Federal government offices in the Washington area will be closed Monday, the Office of Personnel Management said Sunday evening.

Saturday's storm was just what Richard Peyser and his fiancée, Alexandra Zelubowski, were looking for: a

picturesque backdrop for engagement photos in Meridian Hill Park, about a mile north of the White House.

The couple were waiting until the first significant accumulation of snow before shooting their photos. They got more than they bargained for when a crowd of several hundred Washington residents descended on the park around noon for a massive snowball fight. The couple found a relatively quiet corner of the park to take their photos.

Muhyi Eldeen Salih, a native of Sudan, got to see his first snowstorm but wound up experiencing it while stuck in a Philadelphia hostel after his Washington-bound flight was diverted. Mr. Salih had been traveling from New Mexico, where he is volunteering at a nonprofit, to a weeklong training in Washington hosted by Atlas Corps, an international fellowship program.

“It’s a delay but it’s still a good thing that we saw Philadelphia,” he said. “It’s really cold and I can’t feel my fingers, but it is really amazing.”

Snowfall Totals

48-hour accumulation as of 2:30 p.m. Sunday

Experts said it was too early to assess the storm’s full economic impact. [Paul Walsh](#), vice president of weather analytics at the Weather Co., put the initial estimate at more than \$500 million in lost productivity over two days in a region that produces around \$16 billion a day in economic activity. Mr. Walsh said that while the loss is significant for the region, it is small when considered as a share of total U.S. gross domestic product.

“Restaurants, hotels, tourist venues, all those businesses have basically lost a weekend,” Mr. Walsh said. “For retailers, it’s more of a wash. They lost sales this weekend, but likely got some increased spending on the front-end as people prepared for the storm.”

Restoring roads, air travel and public transportation is critical in getting the economy flowing again, said Scott Bernhardt, president of Planalytics, a company that helps businesses prepare for the impact of weather events. “If people can’t get to work Monday, our estimates are going to go up.” The firm estimates the storm cost \$850 million in lost productivity.

Many freight operations up and the down the East Coast were shuttered and package deliveries were delayed as snow and heavy flooding in coastal areas made some roads impassable.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey closed all its marine freight terminals while workers cleared away snow on Monday and authorities waived fees for holding cargo over certain time periods. The port, the third-busiest container shipping gateway in the U.S., warned truckers not to queue up on public roads to wait for gates to open Tuesday morning.

The Port of Baltimore said its main container terminal was closed Monday, but the port reported it received a [Royal Caribbean](#) cruise ship safely early Monday morning.

The Virginia Port Authority said its main port in Norfolk was open, however highway access to a major freight transfer site in Front Royal, Va.—about 75 miles from Washington, D.C.—was shut off.

The storm brought [severe flooding to New Jersey’s southern coast](#). Although the destruction didn’t appear as severe as from 2012’s superstorm Sandy, the flood damage will likely qualify for federal disaster relief, said Stewart Farrell, director of the Coastal Research Center at Stockton University in New Jersey.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan said Sunday he would seek disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The state’s direct costs will reach tens of millions of dollars, Mr. Hogan’s spokesman said, including overtime payments and the mobilization of more than 700 Maryland National Guard soldiers and support staff.

A record-setting blizzard nicknamed Jonas blanketed New York City in over two feet of snow. This time-lapse shows views of the snowstorm slamming the city in Midtown Manhattan and Bryant Park. Photo: Jarrard Cole/The Wall Street Journal

In Oak Orchard, Del., about a dozen people had to be evacuated due to flooding. Delaware transportation officials estimate storm cleanup will cost about \$3 million, said a spokeswoman for Gov. Jack Markell.

In Pennsylvania, rescue workers on Sunday freed the last of hundreds of travelers who were stuck on a 16-mile section of the westbound PA Turnpike. Some, including the Duquesne University men's basketball team, had been stranded since Friday night, when several tractor-trailers jackknifed and brought traffic to a standstill.

American Airlines Inc. began flying again out of its Philadelphia hub on Sunday and La Guardia Airport in New York had its first departure just after 1 p.m. Sunday. [Delta Air Lines](#) Inc., too, said it "anticipated a metered restart" at New York airports, including its hub at Kennedy Airport.

American had canceled all flights at the three major New York City-area airports on Sunday and United Continental Holdings Inc. said flights at its Newark Liberty Airport hub would only begin with a trickle.

In Washington, D.C., the decision to restart service remained out of airlines' control. Runways at Washington Reagan National and Dulles International Airports remained closed Sunday forcing the biggest airlines at each airport, respectively, American and United, to halt flying to the nation's capital until Monday.

Read More

Most gates at the major East Coast airports had been vacant since before the storm began. Many airlines moved their aircraft out of the path of the blizzard or canceled inbound flights to storm-hit airports.

Airlines will operate a phased recovery plan, prioritizing their largest international flights first, and later moving to mainline domestic operations, said Josh Marks, senior vice president of operations solutions at [Global Eagle Entertainment](#) Inc., which provides services to airlines. Regional flights are likely to be the last to recover as airlines don't want to waste limited airport capacity on the smallest flights, he said.

The storm had knocked offline the precision instrument landing systems at all but two of the eight runways at Kennedy Airport, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. An FAA spokeswoman said the system would be restored "as plowing and clearing continues."

At Washington's airports, snow removal crews had been working through the night to clear runways, roadways and parking lots and expected conditions to be reviewed later Sunday to determine when operations may resume, said Kathleen Gibbs a spokeswoman for Washington's Reagan National and Dulles International airports.

The pace of recovery is expected to depend in part on how quickly airport and other aviation staff can get to work. Even if runways can be cleared of snow in Washington, the ground routes to the airport remained blocked. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority said it would offer only limited underground train service in the region on Monday, along with just two dozen bus routes during the afternoon, as it digs out of the storm. It said no fares would be charged throughout the day for either service.

The District of Columbia said it had more than 800 workers on hand to help respond to the storm, in addition to nearly 4,000 volunteers to help elderly or disabled residents. The city deployed more than 100 heavy plows, 73 light plows and 145 dump trucks and had treated its roads with 4,400 tons of salt as of 2:30 p.m. Sunday, according to a spokesman for Mayor Muriel Bowser. The spokesman said it was too early to estimate the economic effects of the storm, saying the city is still in the midst of snow removal and cleanup.

Pepco, the utility provider for the Washington area, said it was too early to estimate costs.

“We’ll have some costs because we had to activate so many people,” said Vincent Morris, a spokesman for Pepco. “We have to still pay them” even if there were fewer outages than expected or outages that were quickly resolved, he said.

—Andrew Ackerman and Scott Calvert contributed to this article.

Write to Christopher M. Matthews at christopher.matthews@wsj.com and Jon Ostrower at jon.ostrower@wsj.com