

# Chicago's biggest snowstorm: The infamous Blizzard of 1967 which stuck with NO advance warning

January 25, 2012 8:18 PM

***By Meteorologist Tom Skilling***

Here are the original weather forecasts which were sent out by teletype to radio and television stations for the Blizzard of 1967 courtesy of Frank Wachowski. The night before the forecast, the prediction was for a 50 percent chance of rain or snow. There was NO word a storm was on its way. The Blizzard of 1967 caught Chicagoans completely by surprise. **The temperature had hit 65-degrees only two days earlier.**

Forecasters in that era had NO satellite imagery, NO in flight aircraft observations, hand plotted their maps and had access to an upper air forecast off one one very simple computer model--the so-called "barotropic" model, which didn't perform well in developmental situations (like the 1967 blizzard situation) and predicted the flow pattern at only one level of the atmosphere.

Today's models which take into account atmospheric developments in up to 90 vertical layers and on a global basis, focusing on small scale features of developing storms, something forecasters in 1967 couldn't even imagine.. **2012 computer projections are run on supercomputers which can perform 80-trillion mathematical operations per second.** And forecasters can look at dozens of different models to hone forecasts.

Prepared by Sam Branning

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CHICAGO AND VICINITY FORECASTS.

Jan. 25, 1967

ISSUED 9:45 AM CST WED JAN 25 1967

THIS AFTERNOON: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. HIGH IN MIDDLE 30S.  
TONIGHT: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. LOW IN LOWER 20S.  
THURSDAY: CLOUDY CHANCE OF SNOW ESPECIALLY IN THE AFTERNOON. HIGH NEAR 30.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES: 5 PERCENT THIS AFTERNOON  
20 PERCENT TONIGHT  
50 PERCENT THURSDAY

WESTERLY WINDS 12 TO 20 MPH THIS AFTERNOON BECOMING VARIABLE 5 TO 10 MPH TONIGHT AND NORTHEAST TO EAST 8 TO 15 MPH THURSDAY.

FRIDAY: SNOW OR RAIN AND LITTLE CHANGE IN TEMPERATURES.

ISSUED 3:45 PM CST WED JAN 25 1967

TONIGHT: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. LOW IN 20S.  
THURSDAY: CLOUDY WITH RAIN OR SNOW LIKELY. HIGH IN 30S.  
THURSDAY NIGHT: RAIN OR SNOW LIKELY. LOW IN LOWER 30S.  
FRIDAY: RAIN OR SNOW PROBABLY ENDING.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES  
20 PERCENT TONIGHT  
50 PERCENT THURSDAY  
50 PERCENT THURSDAY NIGHT

WESTERLY WINDS 6 TO 12 MPH BECOMING VARIABLE TONIGHT AND NORTHEAST TO EAST 10 TO 18 MPH THURSDAY.

ISSUED 9:45 PM CST WED JAN 25 1967

HAZARDOUS DRIVING WARNING LATE TONIGHT AND THURSDAY  
REMAINDER OF TONIGHT: CLOUDY AND COLDER WITH SNOW POSSIBLY MIXED WITH FREEZING RAIN BEGINNING LATE TONIGHT. LOW IN THE UPPER 20S.  
THURSDAY: SNOW MIXED WITH ~~XX~~ FREEZING RAIN LIKELY. HIGH IN THE LOWER 30S.  
THURSDAY NIGHT: SNOW OR RAIN CHANGING TO SNOW AND TURNING COLDER. LOW NEAR 20.  
FRIDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES:  
50 PERCENT THE REMAINDER OF TONIGHT  
GREATER THAN 90 PERCENT THURSDAY AND THURSDAY NIGHT

LIGHT NORTH TO NORTHEAST WINDS TONIGHT AND NORTHEAST TO EAST WITH 10 TO 20 MPH THURSDAY.

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CHICAGO AND VICINITY FORECASTS CONTINUED.

JAN. 26, 1967

ISSUED 8:30 AM THURSDAY JANUARY 26 1967

HEAVY SNOW WARNING

TODAY: SNOW WITH ACCUMULATIONS OF FOUR INCHES OR MORE BY THIS AFTERNOON. HIGH IN LOWER 30S.  
TONIGHT: SNOW DIMINISHING OR ENDING. COLDER WITH LOW NEAR 20.  
FRIDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. HIGH MID 20S.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES:  
GREATER THAN 90 PERCENT TODAY.  
80 PERCENT TONIGHT  
20 PERCENT FRIDAY

NORTHEASTERLY WINDS 15 TO 25 MPH TODAY BECOMING NORTH TO NORTHEAST TONIGHT

ISSUED 9:45 AM THURSDAY JANUARY 26 1967

HEAVY SNOW WARNING

AN ADDITIONAL 4 TO 8 INCHES REMAINDER OF TODAY WITH SNOW DIMINISHING AND ENDING TONIGHT. WINDY WITH TEMPERATURES STEADY THIS AFTERNOON. COLDER WITH LOW 10 TO 15 TONIGHT.  
FRIDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. HIGH MIDDLE 20S.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES:  
100 PERCENT TODAY LOWERING TO 50 PERCENT TONIGHT.  
20 PERCENT FRIDAY.

NORTHEASTERLY WINDS 25 TO 35 MPH THIS AFTERNOON BECOMING NORTH TO NORTHWEST 15 TO 30 MPH TONIGHT AND 12 TO 22 MPH FRIDAY.  
OUTLOOK FOR SATURDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY LITTLE CHANGE IN TEMPERATURES.

ISSUED 3:15 PM THURSDAY JANUARY 26 1967

HAZARDOUS  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~/DRIVING WARNING TONIGHT:

TONIGHT: WINDY WITH SNOW DIMINISHING AND ENDING DURING TONIGHT. ABOUT ONE INCH ADDITIONAL ACCUMULATION BUT CONSIDERABLE DRIFTING AND BLOWING OF SNOW. HAZARDOUS TRAVEL CONDITIONS. COLDER. LOW 10 TO 15.  
FRIDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER. HIGH IN LOW 20S.  
FRIDAY NIGHT: FAIR AND COLDER. LOW ZERO TO 5 ABOVE.  
SATURDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY. RATHER COLE.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES  
MORE THAN 90 PERCENT TONIGHT.  
10 PERCENT FRIDAY  
10 PERCENT FRIDAY NIGHT.

NORTHEAST TO NORTH WINDS 20 TO 30 MPH TONIGHT AND NORTH TO NORTHWEST 20 TO 25 MPH DIMINISHING SLOWLY FRIDAY.

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CHICAGO AND VICINITY FORECASTS. CONTINUED. Jan 26-27, 1967

ISSUED 9:45 PM THURSDAY JANUARY 26 1967

HAZARDOUS DRIVING WARNING REMAINDER OF TONIGHT.

REMAINDER OF TONIGHT: ONE OR TWO INCHES MORE SNOW AND WINDY WITH CONSIDERABLE DRIFTING AND BLOWING SNOW AND HAZARDOUS TRAVEL CONDITIONS. LOW 22 TO 26.

FRIDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY, HIGH IN THE 20S.

FRIDAY NIGHT: FAIR AND COLDER, LOW ZERO TO 5 ABOVE.

SATURDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY, NOT MUCH CHANGE IN TEMPERATURE.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES

MORE THAN 90 PERCENT REMAINDER OF TONIGHT

20 PERCENT FRIDAY

10 PERCENT FRIDAY NIGHT

NORTHEAST TO NORTH WINDS 30 TO 35 MPH TONIGHT AND 20 TO 25 MPH FRIDAY

ISSUED 3:45 AM FRIDAY JANUARY 27 1967

HAZARDOUS DRIVING WARNING

TODAY: SERIOUS DRIFTING WITH STRONG NORTHERLY WINDS CONTINUING THIS MORNING IMPROVING A LITTLE THIS AFTERNOON. SOME LIGHT SNOW. HIGH NEAR 30.  
TONIGHT: PARTLY CLOUDY AND COLDER, LOW ZERO TO 5 ABOVE.  
SATURDAY PARTLY CLOUDY, HIGH IN THE 20S.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES

MORE THAN 90 PERCENT TODAY

10 PERCENT TONIGHT

10 PERCENT SATURDAY

NORTHERLY WINDS 25 TO 35 MPH THIS MORNING DIMINISHING SLOWLY THIS AFTERNOON AND TONIGHT

ISSUED 9:45 AM

HAZARDOUS

~~XXXXXXXX~~ DRIVING WARNING, COLD WAVE WARNINGS TONIGHT.

THIS AFTERNOON: CONTINUED SERIOUS DRIFTING WITH STRONG NORTHWESTERLY WINDS AND A LITTLE SNOW BUT CONDITIONS BEGINNING TO IMPROVE A LITTLE. TEMPERATURES STEADY OR FALLING.  
TONIGHT: COLD WAVE AND PARTLY CLOUDY WITH LOW ZERO TO 5 ABOVE.  
SATURDAY PARTLY CLOUDY, HIGH IN THE 20S.

PROBABILITY OF MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION

30 PERCENT THIS AFTERNOON

10 PERCENT TONIGHT

10 PERCENT SATURDAY.

NORTHWESTERLY WINDS 25 TO 35 MPH DIMINISHING SLOWLY THIS AFTERNOON OR EVENING BECOMING NORTHWESTERLY 10 TO 15 MPH BY SATURDAY MORNING AND VARIABLE BY SATURDAY AFTERNOON.  
OUTLOOK FOR SUNDAY PARTLY CLOUDY AND A LITTLE WARMER.

Hand by Sam Blumberg

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CHICAGO AND VICINITY FORECASTS ~~XXXX~~ CONTINUED.

JAN 27, 1967

ISSUED 3:45 PM FRIDAY JANUARY 27 1967

COLD WAVE TONIGHT

TONIGHT: COLD WAVE WITH CLEARING SKIES AND DIMINISHING WINDS. LOW BY MORNING ZERO TO 10 ABOVE.

SATURDAY: PARTLY SUNNY. HIGH IN THE UPPER 20S.

SATURDAY NIGHT: PARTLY CLOUDY NOT SO COLD. LOW 12 TO 18

SUNDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND WARMER.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES

- 10 PERCENT TONIGHT
- 10 PERCENT SATURDAY
- 10 PERCENT SATURDAY NIGHT

NORTHWESTERLY WINDS 15 TO 25 MPH DIMINISHING SLOWLY TONIGHT BECOMING ~~XXXX~~ WESTERLY 10 TO 15 MPH SATURDAY.

ISSUED 9:45 PM FRIDAY JANUARY 27 1967

REMAINDER OF TONIGHT: FAIR AND CONSIDERABLY COLDER. LOW NEAR 10 IN CITY TO AROUND 5 WESTERN SUBURBS.

SATURDAY: MOSTLY SUNNY. HIGH NEAR 30

SATURDAY NIGHT: PARTLY CLOUDY AND NOT SO COLD. LOW 12 TO 18.

~~XXXXXX~~ SUNDAY: PARTLY CLOUDY AND A LITTLE WARMER.

PRECIPITATION PROBABILITIES:

- 5 PERCENT BOTH TONIGHT AND SATURDAY.
- 10 PERCENT SATURDAY NIGHT.