

Season's first snow is Chicago's largest November snowfall in 120 years

Chicago gets its largest November snowfall in 120 years Chicago Tribune

The season's first snowfall dropped as much as 17 inches across Chicago's northern suburbs, and the total of 11.2 inches at [O'Hare International Airport](#) made it the largest November snowfall in 120 years.

The steady stream of snow began Friday evening and carried into Saturday, bringing cold winds and slushy puddles to Michigan Avenue. But it also fashioned a wintry backdrop to the annual [Magnificent Mile Lights Festival](#), transporting Chicagoans into a life-sized holiday snow globe.

"It rings in the beginning of Christmas season," said Jessica Kendall. "The roads are warm, the snow's melting and we had a nice, wintry drive."



Lake County was walloped. By about 2 p.m. Saturday, there were reports of 17 inches in Grayslake, 16.5 in Hawthorn Woods, and 15.5 inches in Mundelein, said [National Weather Service](#) meteorologist Jamie Enderlen.

McHenry County also was socked, with 13.6 inches in Bull Valley, 12.5 inches in Woodstock and 9.5 inches in Hebron by about 7 a.m. Saturday, according to the weather service.

Communities farther south saw less precipitation. Naperville had 6.4 inches of snow as of midafternoon, and Romeoville had 4.7 inches as of early evening, according to the weather service. Batavia had 7.5 inches by late afternoon.

As of about 6 p.m. Saturday, November 21st 11.2 inches of snow was measured at O'Hare International Airport, where some airlines reported delays of up to 20 minutes and more than 260 flights were canceled. Midway Airport reported 5.8 inches.

According to the weather service, this was the second-largest November snowstorm, behind only a 12-inch snowfall Nov. 25-26, 1895.

This month is catapulted to the fourth snowiest November on record with more than a week remaining. The three snowiest Novembers were 1940 with 14.8 inches, 1895 with 14.5 inches and 1951 with 14.3 inches.

In Lake County, municipal and county removal crews worked Saturday to clear the streets, and Tom Haggerty, Waukegan's director of public works, said late Saturday morning they were succeeding. The major consideration was, as always, urging city residents to move their vehicles off the streets so plow drivers would have an easier time cleaning.

In Aurora, Brian Kannry took it all in stride. As a snowplow driver for Beverly Snow & Ice, the Naperville man spent part of Saturday clearing the Route 59 train station parking lot.

"This is pretty weak," he said of the accumulation. "I was here at 5 a.m. but not much of the snow was sticking. But I've got to keep these sidewalks clear so people don't slip and fall."



Season's first storm brings double-digit snowfall to Chicago's north suburbs

With the steady snowfall and light wind, residents were busy shoveling driveways while children used the weather to build snowmen and go sledding. About a dozen kids and parents were bundled up and out enjoying the sled hill at Arrowhead Park in Naperville.

"My kids have been out here all morning," said Steve Vilim, of Naperville, who was supervising his daughter Elena, 13, and son Teddy, 7. "They were up at 6 a.m. and went right out to build a snowman."

Naperville Sun reporter Susan Frick Carlman and freelance reporters Gary Gibula and Denys Bucksten contributed.

Chicago recorded its second-heaviest snowfall during a single storm in November on Saturday as a burst of winter weather slammed the Midwest, causing hundreds of flights to be cancelled and others to be delayed.

Saturday's snowfall of 11.2 inches recorded Friday and Saturday was beat only by a snowstorm ending on Nov. 26 in 1895 that saw 12 inches of snow fall, the National Weather Service said.

Other parts of the Midwest were hit harder. The city of Tea in South Dakota, southeast of Sioux Falls, saw 18 inches; 16 inches were recorded near Bloomfield, Nebraska; Grayslake, Illinois, north of Chicago, got 16 inches of snow, according to the Weather Channel.

In Delaware County, Indiana, a car crash that killed a 17-year-old passenger Saturday was blamed on slick roads from the weather, [NBC affiliate WTHR reported](#).

The Waukesha County, Wisconsin, sheriff's office reported that there were more than 60 accidents and 55 vehicles that went into ditches on Saturday, [NBC affiliate TMJ reported](#). In Milwaukee County, there were more than 40 crashes and reports of around 30 disabled vehicles, according to the station.

The snow storm over the Chicago area began winding down by 9 p.m. local time (10 p.m. ET), according to [The Weather Channel](#).

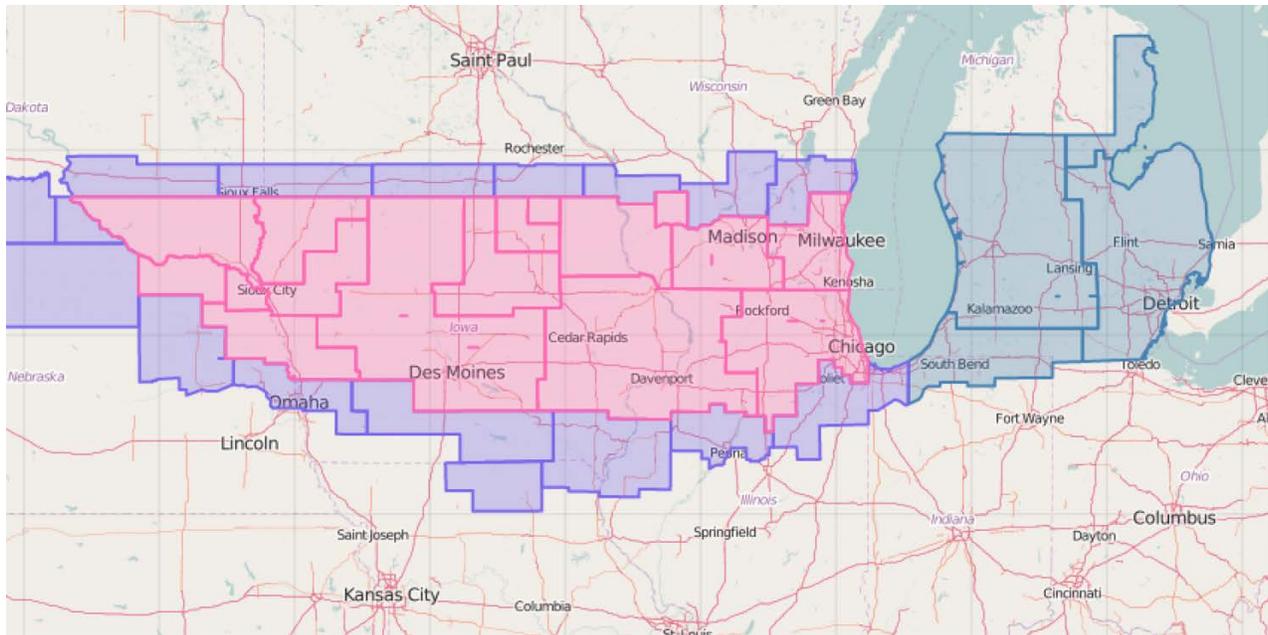
But nearly 400 departing flights were cancelled at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport by Saturday night, and an equal number of arriving flights were also cancelled. About 200 flights had been cancelled in and out of Chicago's Midway International Airport, according to [FlightAware.com](#).

The storm is expected to pick up lake effect snow as it moves east. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Saturday warned of winds of between 25 and 40 mph, and of gusts up to 60 mph, in parts of western and central New York. Up to a foot of snow could fall on Chautauqua County, east of Erie, Pennsylvania, Cuomo said.

In Capron, Illinois, about 60 miles northwest of Chicago, village employee Robert Lukes was clearing sidewalks Saturday after more than a foot of snow fell.

Snowfall rates of 1 to 2 inches per hour are expected in the heaviest snow bands through the afternoon, which extend in an arc from north central Nebraska to eastern Iowa.

Winter storm warnings are in effect from South Dakota and Nebraska through much of Iowa, and east into southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Des Moines, Iowa; Madison, Wisc.; Milwaukee and Chicago are all under winter storm warnings. Winter weather advisories are in effect on the peripheries of the storm track for less significant snow accumulation, and a winter storm watch is in effect in parts of Michigan and northern Indiana.



Winter storm warnings (pink) and winter weather advisories (purple) extend across a large swath of the Midwest on Friday. A winter storm watch (blue) is in effect for parts of Michigan and northern Indiana. (National Weather Service)

The limiting factor for snow accumulation in this storm will be the lack of moisture in the air. There is a lot of dry air that wrapped down into the U.S. from the north behind the last central U.S. storm (which is still trekking through the East Coast on Thursday), so it appears the big moisture has already been tapped in the Midwest.

That's not to say some areas won't see big snow totals. Models continue to suggest that as much as 12 inches or more is possible in the heaviest snow bands.

Snow will spread across far eastern Iowa in the late afternoon or early evening. Models are suggesting the highest snowfall totals in Iowa will range anywhere from 8 to 12 inches, with the Thursday morning GFS being on the high side of things. The National Weather Service in Quad Cities is forecasting a swath of 8 to 10 inches along and north of Interstate 80, though areas in the heaviest snow bands will likely see more.

