

# Governments Declare States of Emergency Over Predicted White-Wash Blizzards

Washington, D.C., and New York City were under blizzard watches on Thursday and states of emergency were declared in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina ahead of a blustery weekend storm expected to slam the East Coast with up to 2 feet (60 cm) of snow.

In anticipation of the first significant East Coast storm of an otherwise balmy winter, Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser said the city's public schools will be shut on Friday and local government offices closed at noon.

Bowser spoke at a news conference surrounded by dump trucks being loaded with tons of salt to treat roads in advance of the big snow. She apologized for not having the city ready for a snowfall of about 2 inches (5 cm) that turned Wednesday's evening rush hour into a commuting ordeal.

Both Bowser and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio urged motorists to stay off the roads, starting on Friday.

"Anyone who has the illusion you're going to be taking big trips over the weekend, get that out of your mind," de Blasio said at a news conference. "People need to take this very seriously and recognize this is a real thing."

Heavy snow and high winds were forecast for the Washington and Baltimore areas with blizzard conditions starting on Friday afternoon, said National Weather Service meteorologist Daniel Petersen.

"The heaviest snows will probably be a bit west of the cities," he said. "We're expecting a fairly large area of 1 to

2 feet of snow from northwestern Virginia to eastern Virginia and parts of central Maryland.”

The storm was expected to deliver a slightly weaker wallop to the New York City and Long Island areas with blizzard conditions from Saturday morning through Sunday.

Some airlines offered to waive change fees for passengers seeking to avoid flying—or getting stuck at the airport—during the storm.

Snow lovers were gleeful with the frosty forecast, with the *New York Post* front page declaring, “This weekend will be ... Whiter Than the Oscars,” referring to the controversy over the lack of diversity in this year’s Academy Award nominations.

Gusts of 60 miles per hour (96 kph) were expected to blast New Jersey beaches, possibly flooding low-lying areas.

Governors in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and joined Bowser in declaring states of emergency while the governor of West Virginia declared a state of preparedness—all to allow for road crews and other workers to get ready for the storm.

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