

# Toronto ice storm: Power outages down by 35%

## Mayor Ford says 'we've got a lot of good news' regarding storm recovery

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Hydro crews are gradually restoring power to tens of thousands of Toronto customers following a weekend ice storm that coated city roads and sent tree limbs falling onto cars, homes and power lines.

By Monday evening, Toronto Hydro reported that 195,000 customers were still without power, but that figure was only two-thirds the number affected in the city at the height of the storm.

Toronto Hydro CEO Anthony Haines said crews won't stop working "until all the lights are on."

Mayor Rob Ford said the decline in outages was among "a lot of good news" coming in on Monday, though he acknowledged that some people will not have the lights turned on by Christmas — and in some cases, not until the coming weekend.

"Right now at this rate, it's going to take a few days, but we're down under 200,000 [customers]," Ford said, when speaking with reporters at Toronto City Hall on Monday afternoon.

Crews were coming in from Windsor, Mississauga and Ottawa, as well as from Manitoba and Michigan, to help get the remaining customers hooked up to power again, Ford said.

Toronto's East General and Sunnybrook hospitals had service restored Monday, after being forced to rely on backup generators when power went out during the storm.

Subway service was restored on Monday, with the exception of the Sheppard line.

Dozens of Toronto Community Housing buildings were still without power, though a small number had seen power restored.

Outside Toronto, another 80,000 customers in southern Ontario were without power as of Monday night.

But despite the improvements, officials remain concerned about plunging temperatures and the people still sitting in homes without heat.

Toronto has expanded the number of warming centres for people in need. On Monday, a number of police stations opened their doors to those seeking shelter as well.

Premier Kathleen Wynne said that Ontarians have been looking out for one another in the wake of the storm and they are going to need to continue to do so.

"Over the last two days, we've seen people work hard together to restore power and services across southern Ontario," Wynne said.

"We've seen people take in their neighbours and offer their support to those in need."

Eileen Rogers, a 93-year-old Torontonians, spoke to CBC News about the kindness her neighbours had shown her.

Neighbours and the superintendent in her building have been bringing her food and coffee and checking up on her often.

"Usually at my age, people don't care, but people do care," she said.

Some Torontonians have been taking steps to find another place to celebrate Christmas.

Brian Deville and his wife, Janet Eastwood, are among hundreds staying in the Royal York Hotel.

"When we got down here at noon yesterday, it was still an over four-hour wait to have our room ready," Deville said Monday.

The hotel says this is normally a quiet time of year, but every one of its 1,365 rooms is currently booked.

## **Safety concerns**

Toronto fire Chief Jim Sales told CBC News that his staff have been responding to a large number of calls, many of which are related to power lines that were brought down by the storm.

Sales said firefighters have managed to catch up with a backlog of pending calls, which between Saturday afternoon and early Monday morning were coming in at seven times the normal rate.

But the fire chief said his teams have also responded to calls involving people who had suffered carbon monoxide poisoning, smoke inhalation and burns as a result of using barbecues to heat their homes.

Sales said that those in need of heat should head to city reception centres and should not do anything to make their homes unsafe.

Late Sunday, firefighters responded to a call on Rustic Road, where a resident had used a candle to check the fuel level in his generator.

Toronto paramedics are also dealing with an increased number of calls, most of which have related to slips and falls on the ice.

A Toronto EMS spokesperson told CBC Toronto that paramedics normally deal with 800 calls on an average day. On Monday, the incoming calls were up 53 per cent from that.

## **Cancellations and closures**

All Toronto District School Board facilities and child-care centres were closed Monday, as were those of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

York University cancelled classes and postponed scheduled exams at its campuses, while Humber College also closed its campus and on-site daycare.

The Toronto Zoo, which is open 364 days a year and usually closes only on Christmas Day, is closed for "inclement weather."

Hundreds of flights were cancelled or delayed at Toronto's Pearson International Airport from the weekend onward.

John Miller tried to board four separate flights at Pearson over a 29-hour period.

But with no apparent flights to Saint John until Boxing Day, he told CBC News that he may end up renting a car.