

# EXTREME NEW HAMPSHIRE WEATHER

New Hampshire's climate means the state can have some pretty incredible weather!  
People in the Granite State have learned how to live with all kinds of wild storms.



**Hurricanes** happen when warm air rises off the ocean and hits cool air in the sky. The air moves quickly in a spiral. When it reaches land, the wind can be over 100 miles per hour!

**When do they happen?**  
Mostly late summer and fall

#### How do people prepare?

People put away or tie down all loose items outside their houses. Some people who live near the ocean will cover their windows with boards so they don't get broken. It's important to have extra drinking water in case water sources are damaged. Some hurricanes are so strong that people need to leave their homes to go somewhere safer until it's over.

**Major New Hampshire hurricanes:**  
1804, 1815, 1938, 1954, 1985, 1991, 2011, 2013



**Blizzards** happen when cold, polar air mixes with warm, southern air. They have winds over 35 miles per hour! The snow makes it very hard to see.

**When do they happen?**  
Winter

#### How do people prepare?

People store extra food and water in case the power goes out. Some people have wood stoves or fireplaces for heat. People can use generators to power their homes or they can use candles and flashlights for light. School is usually cancelled and the government asks people to stay at home until they can plow the roads. Driving in a blizzard is very unsafe!

**Major New Hampshire blizzards:**  
1717, 1888, 1978, 1997, 2003, 2013, 2015



**Ice Storms** happen when super-cold rain falls and lands on surfaces that are colder than freezing. Ice can cover trees, roads, buildings, and cars. Ice is heavy and can cause lots of damage.

**When do they happen?**  
Winter

#### How do people prepare?

Ice storms can cause people to lose electricity for days because the ice can pull down power lines. Towns and cities work hard to put down sand and salt to melt ice on the roads. People with big trees near their homes trim the branches so they won't fall and damage their roofs. It is important to stay indoors as much as possible until the ice melts.

**Major New Hampshire ice storms:**  
1921, 1998, 2008



**Floods** are caused by heavy rains. When lots of rain falls quickly, it can overwhelm rivers, stream, dams, and drains. Flooding can also happen when storms cause the ocean to surge.

**When do they happen?**  
Any time of year, but mostly spring

#### How do people prepare?

Flooding is the most common type of extreme weather in New Hampshire. Sometimes towns and cities will put up sandbags near water sources to help keep them from overflowing. People listen carefully to the news to see if they need to leave their homes before the area floods. Water can push cars off the road so people avoid driving on flooded streets.

**Major New Hampshire floods:**  
1895, 1896, 1936, 1981, 1987, 1996, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2019



#### What about tornados?

A tornado is a spinning column of air that stretches from the ground to the clouds. They usually form out of thunderstorms. New Hampshire doesn't get many tornados because the air doesn't usually get hot and wet enough to let them form. However, that doesn't mean we have none! New Hampshire averages about two tornados per year but they aren't usually very big. The worst ones recorded in New Hampshire were in 1787, 1821, and 1898.



1. What are some of the similarities in how people prepare for different kinds of extreme weather?
2. Why do you think floods are the most common kind of extreme weather in New Hampshire?
3. How do you think the way people experience extreme weather today is different than it was 150 years ago?
4. What kinds of extreme weather have you experienced? How did you prepare? What happened?