

Winter Storm Gail Makes Herself at Home in Darien; Remote School Classes, Town Hall Closed

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With more snow expected to fall before 1 p.m. and possible wind gusts of up to 38 mph in Darien, Winter Storm Gail continues to get herself settled in, closing school buildings, the town library and Town Hall.

A total of 56 electricity customers were without power as of 8:35 a.m., Thursday, according to Eversource. Around the state, 411 Eversource customers were without power.

Weather Forecast

The National Weather Service forecast for Darien, as of 7:56 a.m., says we'll have "Snow, mainly before noon. High near 31. Wind chill values between 10 and 20. Blustery, with a north wind 19 to 24 mph decreasing to 13 to 18 mph in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 37 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. Total daytime snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible."

For tonight: "Mostly cloudy, with a low around 19. Wind chill values between 10 and 15. North wind around 11 mph."

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For Friday: "Mostly sunny, with a high near 33. Wind chill values between 10 and 20. North wind around 9 mph."

After Thursday, no more snow is expected through Wednesday of next week, with daytime high temperatures above freezing, but not getting to even 41 degrees until Sunday, so expect some snow to stick around.

Darien Buttons Up, Battens Down

Please don't drive unless you need to (because police and first responders may be busy with road accidents and problems), First Selectman Jayme Stevenson said in an announcement late Wednesday afternoon (see full text, below). She also provided storm-related call information and recommended various ways for adults and children to stay safe outside.

Expect snow plows to clear streets fully only in stages, Stevenson said: "Widening drivable areas will follow once the storm has concluded and may take several days."

She also asked people to check on neighbors "who may be less capable of managing during a storm event of this magnitude." Town officials will decide later if it's necessary to open warming stations.

At 5:53 a.m., Schools Superintendent Alan Addley announced that school buildings will be closed to students: "Today, Thursday, Dec. 17 is a remote learning day. Stay warm and have a good day."

"Town employees who are able will be working from home today," Stevenson announced early Thursday morning.

Code Red Announcement

*The first selectman broadcast this Code Red announcement by phone and email late Wednesday afternoon (**boldface** added by *Darienite.com*):*

This is First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson with a Winter Storm Warning message for **Wednesday, Dec. 16**.

A Winter Storm Warning has been issued for all of Connecticut beginning at 7 p.m. this evening and extending until 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17.

Winter Storm Gail, the first major nor'easter of the winter season, is expected to begin impacting Darien between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. this evening with heavy snow expected throughout the night. Accumulations of between 1 ½ and 3 inches per hour are possible and may cause dangerous white-out conditions. Strong winds and wind gusts of up to 40 mph may cause power and communication system outages. Repairs will not begin until storm conditions subside.

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We recommend waiting 8 hours before clearing sidewalks as town and state plows will move snow back onto sidewalks.

In white-out conditions, plow drivers cannot see pedestrians or pets. Do not walk or run anywhere near roadways where plows are actively plowing. If you must walk outside near roadways during the storm, wear high-visibility clothing.

Non-essential travel on local and state roadways tonight and tomorrow is strongly discouraged. Police, Fire and EMS responding to stranded motorists and minor traffic incidents slows response to more serious storm related emergencies.

Moving and removing snow from a large storm event must occur in stages. Keeping roads passable for emergency vehicles is our first priority. **Widening drivable areas will follow once the storm has concluded and may take several days.**

Please check in with neighbors who may be less capable of managing during a storm event of this magnitude. Temperatures will be well below freezing for the next several evenings. The Town [government] will assess the need for warming centers as the need arises.

Darien Public Schools are in remote-learning status and the Darien Library is closed on Thursday, Dec. 16.

Do not call 911 for routine storm questions. 911 lines must stay open for life-threatening and emergency calls only.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency/Life-Safety: 911 Police Non-Emergency: (203)662-5300

Emergency Operations Center: DarienEOC@darienct.gov

Eversource: Power Outages: 800-286-2000 Online @ <https://www.eversource.com/CustomerCare/ReportOutage>

Altice (Optimum): Residential Customer Service: 866-950-3278 Message Optimum @ optimum.net/chat
Tweet to @Optimumhelp

Frontier: Damaged poles, downed wires/cable: 877-486-5667

Aquarion: Daytime- 800-732-9678; Emergency Answering Service: 888-234-3128

STAY SAFE!