

City of Gardner
Office of Michael J. Nicholson

I want to begin by clearing up some misinformation that I have been informed has been spreading on social media. The Administrations, at the City & State Levels, have **not** declared a State of Emergency at this time. Gardner is NOT under a state of emergency as some members of the public are inaccurately and falsely stating.

As of this email, there are still 281 properties in Gardner without power.

Emergency Overnight Shelter Activated at the Gardner Senior Center 1/24-1/25:

Working with our Emergency Management Director, Paul Topolski, (copied on this email), I have directed those twenty-five (25) cots be placed in the gathering room of the Gardner Senior Center for the purpose of having the area be an overnight shelter for those still without power this evening. During the 2008 Ice Storm, FEMA and the National Guard provided these cots for our shelters. Following that event, the City purchased 500 of these cots that we still have in our possession. This shelter will be staffed with members of our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers and a police officer.

Planning for Wednesday, January 25:

The remaining cots are going to remain in their storage trailer that will be staged at the Gardner Middle School. While most of the City has power restored today except for a few locations, we are concerned about tomorrow. The National Weather Service has issued the following warning for Gardner:

Event: Winter Storm Watch

Alert: . . . WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM WEDNESDAY MORNING THROUGH THURSDAY MORNING . . .

* WHAT...Heavy snow possible. Total snow accumulations of 4 to 7

inches possible. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

* WHERE...Portions of central and western Massachusetts.

* WHEN...From Wednesday morning through Thursday morning.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

The main issue with this is that with temperatures remaining below freezing throughout today and tomorrow, a lot of power wires and trees are still coated in a couple inches of ice and snow. Adding any additional weight from wet/heavy snow could likely cause further power outages from additional tree damage and wire issues.

Potential for Secondary Emergency Overnight Shelter if further power outages experienced:

In the event of further power outages occur, I will be directing our emergency personnel to establish an emergency shelter at both the Gardner Senior Center and Gardner Middle School utilizing the supplies we purchased after the Ice Storm. This shelter, **IF OPENED AND NEEDED**, will open on Thursday morning following the completion of the storm, in order to make sure people are not out on the roads driving in unsafe conditions while plows are trying to clear the streets. If opened and needed, it will remain opened until power is restored to most areas of the City. During this time, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated at the Gardner Police Department. Additional information will be provided IF this shelter needs to open. Notification of the shelter opening will be communicated to local media outlets, posted on the City's website and social media outlets, and sent out via the City's CodeRED system. Video messages will also be sent out via the City's social media platforms and Youtube. GETV will also post notifications as well. The call to set up this facility will not be made until tomorrow after we can evaluate how the storm and the situation are progressing, but we wanted to have the plan in place that if needed, all that has to be done is to say "go."

PARKING BAN WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 8PM THROUGH THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 AT 7:30AM

While the need for a shelter has not yet been made, we do know that the snow is coming. Since there is still spots that snow can be pushed back from the streets from this storm and we know we have 4-7 inches of snow on the way, there will be an on-street parking ban beginning on Wednesday, January 25th at 8:00 pm and expiring on Thursday, January 26th at 7:30 am to fully allow crews to be able to clear the streets from the two storms.

Status on Salt

As stated in my previous correspondence regarding the storm, the DPW received a new shipment of Salt yesterday morning. We currently have 300 tons of salt stored at the DPW garage. This should be enough to get us through this storm. To put this into perspective, the School Department alone has used 34 tons of salt in the last two weeks treating the school owned properties.

Additional information will be sent out to this group as needed in the coming days as the situations arise.

Respectfully,

Mike Nicholson

Michael J. Nicholson

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