

Windstorm packs a punch



Monte Sonnenberg

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Published on: February 25, 2019 | Last Updated: February 25, 2019 6:41 PM EST



The weekend's storm surge in Port Dover coupled with a sudden drop in temperature caked low-lying areas of the downtown waterfront in ice. Norfolk County used heavy equipment to scoop up the ice and pile it in the middle of Harbour Street near St. George Street. Checking it out Monday morning was Rick Daisley of Port Dover. *MONTESONNENBERG / SIMCOE REFORMER*

PORT DOVER — This weekend's wind storm created hazardous conditions in Norfolk and surrounding area but there are no reports of injuries arising from it.

A 70-year-old angler had a close call Sunday morning when he ventured onto Long Point Bay for some ice fishing.

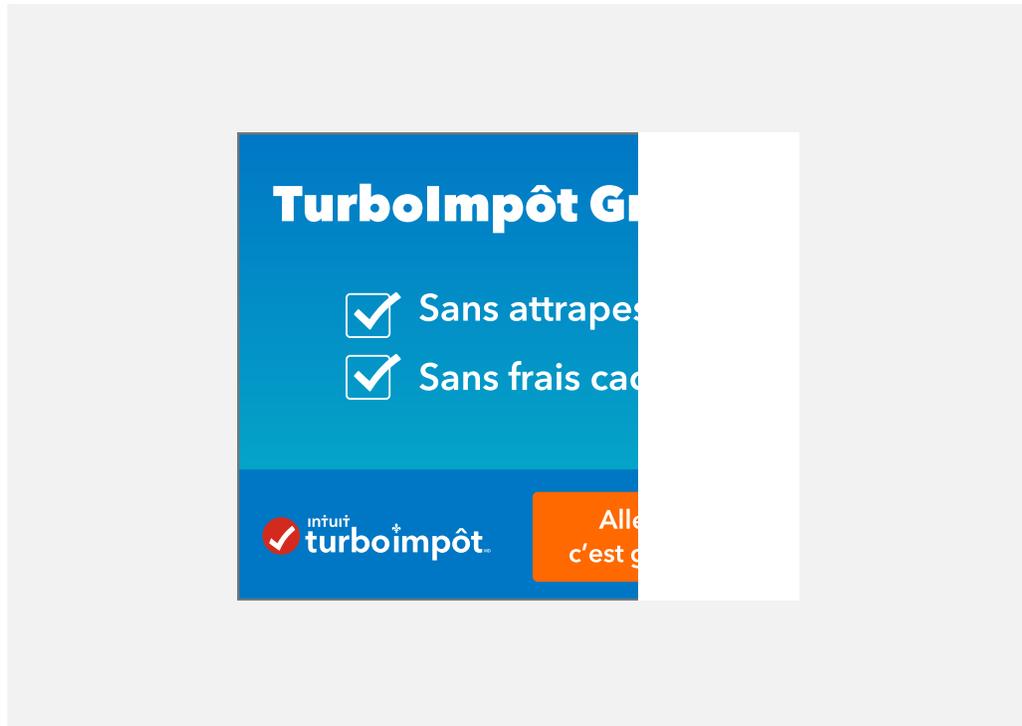
The man got offshore some distance south of Booth's Harbour when he realized he was unable to manoeuvre due to strong gusts. Police report

he ended up lying on the ice, anchoring himself in place with an ice pick until help arrived.

Const. Ed Sanchuk, spokesperson for the Norfolk OPP, said Norfolk firefighters from three stations brought the man to shore safely.

However, Sanchuk said anglers and anyone else venturing onto the ice needs to think twice when winds are as violent as they were on Sunday.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW



"We need people to use common sense," Sanchuk said in a social media posting from Booth's Harbour. "Not only did he risk his life, he risked the lives of emergency personnel who attended. Today is not a day for ice fishing.

"We're lucky we're not dealing with a fatality here. Stay off the ice. It's not worth your life or the life of innocent emergency personnel."

There was another close call on Victoria Street in Simcoe Sunday morning when a large tree came down across the road. The incident caused serious damage to the front end and hood of an approaching motorist, who was not injured.

The late winter storm occurred when a mass of warm, moist air from the south clashed with a cold front from the north. The resulting wind storm packed gusts in excess of 120 kilometres an hour along lakeshore areas and lasted about 24 hours.

As often happens with wind events of this kind, the gusts created a storm surge that caused serious flooding in Port Dover along the Lynn River and Harbour Street and Walker Street. The flooding along Walker Street extended east to the intersection of St. Andrew Street.



Parts of Port Dover suffered heavy flooding during Sunday's windstorm. *NORFOLK OPP / TWITTER PHOTO*

The storm surge necessitated another rescue near the intersection of River Drive and Grand Street in Port Dover north of the Highway 6 lift bridge. Norfolk OPP report firefighters successfully extricated a 77-year-old woman from her home as the water welled up around her property.

After the cold front blew through Sunday, the county had to bring heavy equipment in to low-lying areas of Port Dover and remove a thick layer of ice. The ice is in a big pile on Harbour Street near the intersection of St. George Street. The pile is so large that this section of Harbour Street will be off-limits to traffic until the ice melts or is removed.

The wind storm caused havoc on roads in southern Ontario when the snow began to fly. White-out conditions were reported in some areas that persisted into Monday. Schools and bus service in Norfolk County were cancelled due to the inclement weather. This marked the seventh snow day for schools this year.

Wind storms have the effect of identifying weakened trees, limbs and branches. Evergreen trees are especially vulnerable because they don't drop their leaves and they tend to have shallow, lateral root systems.

Local cemeteries are vulnerable to wind storms because of their mature trees. Limbs and branches came down in Oakwood Cemetery in Simcoe,

Port Dover Cemetery and Greenwood Cemetery in Waterford this weekend but previous wind storms have done much more damage.

Greenwood superintendent Harold Sonnenberg said Monday that he was pleasantly surprised by how well the Waterford cemetery stood up to this weekend’s weather. There are limbs and branches down, he said, but nothing that can’t be cleaned up in half an hour or so.

“Every time the wind blows, something comes down,” Sonnenberg said. “These are old trees.”



Ice floes blown ashore in Port Dover during Sunday’s wind storm made short work of this snow fence on the Walker Street beach.
MONTE SONNENBERG / SIMCOE REFORMER

Harsh winters such as this are tough on areas along the lakeshore.

Especially hard hit during this time of high lake levels is Long Point. The entire length of Hastings Drive in Long Point is closed until further notice due to ice and water over the road allowance.

Gerald Cheng, a meteorologist with Environment Canada, said the

severe late winter weather is pay back for mild weather in December and early January. And it’s not over yet.

“We are going to round out the end of February with below seasonal temperatures, for the most part,” he said.

– *With files from Postmedia News*

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Jean Hamel

Incorrect. Hastings Drive was bone dry and unaffected. They wheel out that "road closed" sign every she's holding up well for an unmaintained road. If/when the water breaks through it's on County lanc nothing about it.

Like · Reply · 4 · 6w



Bonnie Sutton

They close Hastings Drive when rain makes puddles on the uneven unmaintained road ... l areas are inundated and flooded and not mentioned.

Like · Reply · 4 · 6w



Izzy McCoy Hunter

The information regarding the road conditions on Hastings Drive are drastically exaggerated (as usu county drags out that "road closure" sign (which now permanently stays in the ditch) everytime there would suggest your reporter(s) get out from behind their desk and take a drive down Hastings to giv description.

Like · Reply · 2 · 6w



Woody Hamel

I just want to add that just because there is a road closed sign on Hastings Drive does not mean any closed sign goes up on Hastings Drive at the first sign of anything such as if the forecast says cloud meatballs, lol. Unfortunately more often then not there is incorrect information spread about Hasting case, because in actuality the the road was just fine. People need to stop jumping to conclusions an false information as to the conditions on Hastings Drive. I have never been unable to safely navigate Maybe discuss the actual flooding on Beach Ave., Long Point, instead of discussing the road closed Drive which no one obeys anyways.

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