In November 2008 two damaging storms affected southern Finland. The storm on 10 November caused up to 29 m/s wind gusts over land areas. On 23 November the measured wind gusts reached 27 m/s, but it was accompanied with heavy snowfall, up to 30 cm in 24 hours. These cases offered a change to study wind gusts over land areas. On 23 November the measured wind gusts reached 27 m/s, but it was accompanied with heavy snowfall, up to 30 cm in 24 hours. These cases offered a change to study wind gusts over land areas.

Vaisala's DSC111 optical instrument.

Examples of damage that can occur with certain gust speeds were gathered.

Road weather observations from Finnish Road Administrations and rescue operations.

During the 10-11 November case all precipitation was in the liquid form. When the rainfall was moderate, there was a small decrease in the road surface friction values. Also the strong wind gusts had a negative impact on driving conditions.

On 23 November the heavy snowfall caused the friction values to drop from ca. 0.8 to 0.2 or below. The low friction values prevailed for almost 12 hours in spite of maintenance actions. In addition the visibility was very poor and also the strong wind had a negative impact on the driving conditions.

10-11 November storm
- The number of traffic accidents was close to average.
- The number of Rescue Services rescue operations was four times the normal.
- 54% of weather related rescue operations concerned falling trees on roads.
- 6 traffic accidents of a car crashing into a tree blocking the road.
- Rescue Services reported 6 injured during the event.
- Power failures to over 70 000 households.

23-24 November blizzard
- In the worst affected province (Uusimaa), on 23rd the number of traffic accidents was fourfold, on 24th more than three times the average.
- The total number of Rescue Services rescue operations was double the normal.
- 54% of weather related rescue operations concerned falling trees on roads.
- 20 traffic accidents of a car crashing into a tree blocking the road.
- The driver did not in poor visibility and slippery road conditions see the fallen tree early enough.
- A tree fell over a car.
- Rescue Service reported 145 traffic accidents, in which 54 injured and one died.
- Power failures to over 41 000 households.

PREPAREDNESS FOR FUTURE STORMS

Understanding the consequences of severe weather on society helps develop preparedness for such events in the future. Knowledge on typical impacts of events can guide the formulation of several preparedness measures that aim to prevent casualties:
- General guidance for authorities and the public.
- Call-to-action statements.
- Site-specific action plans for people, private and public properties, and outdoor venues.

The impact information can also be used to mitigate property damage and ensure society’s faster recovery by planning ahead, when severe weather is forecasted.

The impacts of certain severe weather on society, does not only depend on the intensity of the phenomena, but also on local effects like topography, vegetation, construction standards and local human behaviour. Therefore, the local effects should be considered when defining the typical impacts or safety rules for a certain area.

Wind storm and blizzard impact damage chart.

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