

Cleanup begins after tornado hits Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven

The sounds of chainsaws, leaf blowers and wood chippers filled the air in the south Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven on Friday, as the cleanup continued after a tornado tore through the area 24 hours earlier.

Approximately 125 homes were damaged when at least one tornado touched down at approximately 12:45 p.m. Thursday during a severe thunderstorm.

"What we've seen so far is very typical of an EF0 or EF1 tornado, and so we'll have a preliminary classification on that, hopefully, by the end of the day," Aaron Jaffe, an engineering researcher with Western University's Northern Tornadoes Project, told CTV News Ottawa.

"The path looks to be a few kilometres long, maybe 100 metres wide."

As the Northern Tornadoes Project team of investigators assessed the size and the strength of the tornado, residents, city staff and arborists began the long cleanup process.

"It's go, go, go," Devin Runge, owner of Gigi's tree care, said as crews cleared trees from properties in Barrhaven.

"A lot of these trees are completely compromised and have fallen onto the home."

City officials said Thursday night that the majority of the damage was in three areas of Barrhaven.

- 50 homes in the Umbra Place/Watercolours Way area
- 35 houses in the Perseus Way/Proxima Terrace area
- 30 to 40 houses in the Jockvale Road/Exeter Drive area

"The shock is wearing off," Coun. David Hill told Newstalk 580 CFRA's Ottawa at Work on Friday.

"It's definitely a bit of a different feel out there. You don't see the litter and the things in the middle of the road like we did yesterday."

The storm also downed dozens of tree branches and limbs, knocked over fences and damaged roofs on many homes.

"Cosmetic damage, stuff that can be replaced," Mauro Mazzuca said Friday. "Nobody was hurt, nobody was at the house. We were lucky that way."

Contractors and city staff spent the day clearing roads, sidewalks and properties of debris, while Hydro Ottawa crews are working to repair infrastructure damaged by the storm.

"The damage varies from roofs being ripped off of the homes, the shingles and the sheathing, down to broken windows and trees being down and various other damage to structures," Kim Ayotte, Ottawa's general manager of emergency and protective services, said on Thursday.

"At this time, we have crews cleaning up roads."



The city of Ottawa says the majority of the homes damaged by Thursday's tornado are in three areas of Barrhaven.

Hill says the 125 homes highlighted by the city of Ottawa have significant damage that may mean residents need to find a different place to stay.

"On top of that, you have many more with minor superficial damage."

Hill says staff are doing a second visit through the neighbourhood to check on residents.

Residents have also reported damage across the Barrhaven area, including along the VIA Rail tracks, near the Home Depot on Strandherd Drive, at the Lankin Tennis Courts and along a pathway at Bentbrook Crescent.

The city says there are no reports of damage or impacts to city infrastructure in Barrhaven following the tornado.

Public Works staff have already been deployed to begin clearing debris from roads and sidewalks.

In an update Friday afternoon, city of Ottawa officials said staff have been working to make roads, parks and right-of-ways "safe again."

"All known hazards have already been addressed. However, the City asks that residents report any tree, road or parks related hazards to 3-1-1 for follow-up," the city said in a statement.

Curbside removal of tree and yard debris will begin next week.



A tarp covers a damaged roof on Metal Way in Barrhaven, one day after a tornado ripped through the area. (Peter Szperling/CTV News Ottawa)

In a memo to Council Thursday night, Beth Gooding, Director of Public Safety Services, said more details about the cleanup will be shared with residents.

"Public Works Department have prioritized debris removal today related to public safety (e.g., branches or tree limbs that are blocking roads)," Gooding said.

"They are finalizing a debris removal plan for the remainder of the City's clean-up work in Barrhaven. Staff are also working on messaging to residents, to support resident clean-up efforts."

Environment Canada confirmed one tornado touched down in Barrhaven, damaging homes and buildings.



Arborists work to cut down damaged trees after a tornado ripped through Barrhaven on Friday. (Chris Black/CTV News Ottawa)

Investigating the tornado

Staff with Western University's Northern Tornadoes Project are in Ottawa today to investigate the tornado and its aftermath.

Researchers will assess the damage and assign a rating to the storm.

"What our team is going there to try to figure out is; number 1, the intensity of the tornado," Connell Miller, wind impacts researcher of the Northern Tornadoes Project, told CTV Morning Live.

"Our team is out there; we have some structural engineers on the team to take a look at the homes that were damaged, take a look at things like the construction quality of the home and determine what wind speeds could have potentially caused this. As well as trying to figure out the overall path length and width of this tornado."

Miller says videos and photos posted to social media will assist researchers with the investigation into the storm.

This is the first tornado to touch down in Ottawa since 2019.

Canada sees approximately 120 tornadoes a year, according to the Northern Tornadoes Project.

Tornado cleanup continues in Barrhaven today. This is Exeter Drive. Lots of trees down. Some damage to homes in the area. [@ctvottawa pic.twitter.com/mWBkabWaFb](https://twitter.com/mWBkabWaFb)

— Jeremie Charron (@JCharronCTV) [July 14, 2023](#)

Community Support Centre

The city of Ottawa says a community support centre is open on Friday at the Minto Recreation Complex at 3500 Cambrian Road. The centre will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Staff from Building Code Services, Ottawa Fire Services, and Emergency Social Services will be on scene to provide information to residents.

With files from CTV News Ottawa's Jeremie Charron and Natalie van Rooy

RELATED IMAGES



PreviousNext

A home on Pepperrall Crescent in Barrhaven is damaged during a severe storm hit Ottawa on Thursday, July 13, 2023. (Elvira Hadziresic/CTV Viewer)



PreviousNext

The cleanup ramped up in Barrhaven on Friday, one day after a tornado ripped through the south Ottawa suburb. (Chris Black/CTV news Ottawa)



[Previous](#)[Next](#)

Homes are left damaged following a tornado in the Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven on Thursday, July 13, 2023. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick



PreviousNext

A home on Pepperrall Crescent in Barrhaven is damaged during a severe storm hit Ottawa on Thursday, July 13, 2023. (Elvira Hadziresic/CTV Viewer)



PreviousNext

The cleanup ramped up in Barrhaven on Friday, one day after a tornado ripped through the south Ottawa suburb. (Chris Black/CTV news Ottawa)



[Previous](#)[Next](#)

Homes are left damaged following a tornado in the Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven on Thursday, July 13, 2023. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick



[Previous](#)[Next](#)

A home on Pepperrall Crescent in Barrhaven is damaged during a severe storm hit Ottawa on Thursday, July 13, 2023. (Elvira Hadziresic/CTV Viewer)

[Report an error](#)

[Editorial standards & policies](#)

[Why you can trust CTV News](#)