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## Storm deals damage, knocks out power for thousands on North Shore

Jane Seyd / North Shore News

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North Vancouver RCMP officers help load a badly damaged Honda onto a flatbed after a violent storm blew through town on the weekend. photo Cindy Goodman

Close to 28,000 homes on the North Shore were without power at the peak of a powerful windstorm Saturday that sent trees crashing onto parked cars and down across the “Cut” on Highway 1 in North Vancouver.

High winds sent one 70-year-old balsam fir crashing down in the 1500-block of Kings Street in West Vancouver, destroying two parked cars. A woman driving eastbound on the highway between Taylor Way and 15th Street also had her car hit by a falling tree about a foot in diameter, but luckily escaped without injury, said Jeff Bush, assistant fire chief at West Vancouver Fire and Rescue.

Bush said some fallers driving westbound on the highway who saw the accident stopped their vehicle, jumped out and cut the tree off the car. “It was a noble thing to do, but not the safest thing they could have done,” he said.

Highway 1 was also closed temporarily in North Vancouver after winds sent a tree down across the “Cut” around 1 p.m. Saturday.

Another woman in North Vancouver was reportedly injured after being hit in the face by a flying tree branch, said Bush.

While firefighters and arborists worked across the North Shore to clear trees that fell on fences, sheds and houses, BC Hydro crews had their work cut out trying to restore power.

Approximately 27,650 homes were without power on the North Shore on Saturday and 19,357 remained in the dark on Sunday. An unlucky 11,000 customers were without power Monday. By Tuesday, power was restored to all but a handful of customers.

The power outages and flying debris kept municipal crews busy throughout the weekend. In the City of North Vancouver, crews had to hook up a manual pump system to a sewage station at Bewicke Avenue to keep the sewer from overflowing after power failed there.

Work crews in West Vancouver were busy juggling generators between pump stations for similar reasons.

At the peak of the storm on Saturday — between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. — southeasterly winds off Point Atkinson in West Vancouver measured 102 kilometres an hour, said Environment Canada meteorologist Matt MacDonald.

MacDonald said the storm rapidly intensified as it approached the West Coast, which meant the weather office only had time to give about three hours' warning of the approaching windstorm.

"Once we could see the whites of its eyes we realized it was going to be a severe wind maker," he said.

Previous months of drought and the fact the storm hit in August added to the damage tally, he said.

"To throw that much wind at a full-leafed tree that's already stressed by drought doesn't give it much of a chance."

Rain brought from the remnants of a tropical storm this weekend dumped about three times the amount of rain that the region has had all summer in just three days, said MacDonald.

The West Vancouver weather station measured 117 millimetres of rain between Friday and Sunday, while Mount Strachan recorded 134 mm at higher elevation.

The storm marked a dramatic shift in weather patterns that have remained predominantly hot and dry since May. But the change won't be permanent. MacDonald said warmer summer weather is expected to return for the Labour Day long weekend with highs of about 21 degrees.

The extended forecast is also looking mostly warm and dry, he added.

## Photo Gallery on North Shore News

### Windstorm hits North Shore

A powerful windstorm passed through the Lower Mainland Saturday, Aug. 29 causing trees to topple, and power outages across the North Shore.

August 29, 2015

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photo Paul McGrath

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