

SLT liquor store roof collapses; snow shuts schools, businesses, courts, roads



The liquor store at Harrison Avenue sustained substantial damage when the roof caved in Jan. 23 because of the snow load. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

The roof at the liquor store on Harrison Avenue collapsed early this morning from the weight of all the snow.

Another foot of snow fell overnight in South Lake Tahoe, with Meyers reporting 2 feet.

Fire and police officials have been at the commercial complex since the call came in at 2:45am Jan. 23.

“When we arrived there was water coming out of the rear of the liquor store,” Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We determined the roof had collapsed and broke the sprinkler pipe. There is a ton of water on the street. STPUD had to come out to dig through the snow to find the main shut-off valve.”

Cracks in the façade and near the windows are visible from the outside.

People are being asked to avoid that area of South Lake Tahoe.

Building officials will assess the amount of damage to the neighboring businesses. Until they get inside the extent of damage remains unknown. Meston, though, said, “It could be significant.”

Animals at the veterinary clinic that is adjacent to the liquor store have been evacuated.



The liquor store could be a total loss after the roof collapsed Jan. 23. Photo/Provided

Water was also coming out of the massage business. Rojo's restaurant, which is a bit west of the liquor store, may have been spared.

So far this is the only known roof to have collapsed in town.

Officials are urging people to clear snow off roofs if possible. With the rain, freeze and now snow, the weight just keeps getting heavier. Flat roofs, like the liquor store's, are most problematic.

Any house built after 1970 had more substantive codes to follow. Current loads are supposed to be able to handle 100 pounds. With the assumption 1 foot of snow has 1 gallon of water, some roofs could technically handle 12 feet of snow. But with the weather Tahoe has had and the wet snow and rain earlier this month, the actual load on roofs could be heavier

than that calculation.

The good news is this last storm brought light snow.

It is the flat roofs that concerns officials the most.

“They hold the snow. It becomes like a swimming pool; if the drain clogs, it holds all that wet snow,” Dave Walker, South Lake Tahoe building inspector, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “People with flat roofs, please get up there and clear drains and see if it’s holding a bunch of water.”

Fire and building officials will be going to some commercial buildings and inspecting city offices later today.

People are also encouraged to get rid of icicles because they are heavy and can contribute to bringing down a roof.

In other weather news, Lake Tahoe Unified, Douglas County, Tahoe Truckee Unified, Lake Tahoe Community College, Incline Village, and Sierra Nevada College are closed Jan. 23. Non-essential South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County employees don’t have to report to work. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the U.S. Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe are closed.

El Dorado County Superior Court in South Lake Tahoe is closed on Monday. All matters in Department 3 will be continued until Tuesday. Cases in Department 4 will be rescheduled. More info is **online**.

South Tahoe Refuse will only service commercial customers today. Residents with Monday service may take trash to STR’s facilities for free or wait a week.

Incline Village and Crystal Bay remain under a shelter in place order because of the threat of avalanche.

Not all ski resorts will be open because of avalanche danger and needing to dig out. Call before you go.

Sierra Avalanche Center says conditions are “considerable” for Monday. That translates to no one should be in the backcountry.

Snow is expected to linger today in the basin and beyond. There should be a partial clearing on Tuesday, with more sun as the week progresses.

Roads on Monday will be difficult to navigate because most are not plowed. For current highway conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

Highway 89 from Tahoe City to Squaw Valley Road is closed because of an avalanche. The California Highway Patrol is reporting two cars were struck by the snow, but no one was injured.