# Boston Globe Weather Mailbag: Key Questions and Answers



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The Boston Globe Weather Mailbag is a weekly feature where readers' weather-related questions are answered. This week addresses topics including temperature fluctuations in New England, the Blizzard of '78, pollen effects, and a weather-related adage.

#### Temperature Variations in New England

Jared Pendak from Bradford, VT, queried why Vermont occasionally experiences warmer temperatures than eastern Massachusetts. Factors influencing this include sea breezes, which keep coastal areas cooler, and elevation differences that affect temperature. For example, Vermont is about 1,000 feet above sea level, generally resulting in a 5 to 6-degree temperature difference compared to sea-level areas.

#### The Blizzard of 1978

Ruth Sturtevant from Upton inquired about the drastic nature of the 1978 snowstorm. The Blizzard of '78 was a powerful nor'easter that coincided with high monthly tides. A strong low-pressure system moved up the coast, churning over New England for about a day and a half, resulting in 27 inches of snow in Boston and wind gusts up to 110 mph. The storm caused extensive coastal flooding and significant disruptions due to snow drifts and power outages.

#### Pollen and Warm Temperatures

Lauren Neal from West Roxbury asked why pollen seems worse with warm temperatures. Plants release more pollen during warmer periods to reproduce. Warm air is lighter, allowing pollen to spread more widely, contributing to longer and more intense allergy seasons.

#### The Phrase: "Red Sky at Night, Sailor’s Delight"

Emily Sweeney from the Globe newsroom asked about the meaning of "Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailors take warning." Red skies are typically linked to weather patterns and moisture in the atmosphere. A red sky at sunset often indicates stable high-pressure weather, leading to calm conditions. Conversely, a red sky in the morning suggests that a storm system may be approaching from the west, potentially bringing rain.

Readers can submit their weather questions to the Globe team, which may also lead to in-depth articles on specific topics.