

## BALTIMORE SUN

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### **Bahamas-bound cruise ship sails away on time**

I guess if you had the tropical breezes and warm blue ocean of the Bahamas awaiting you, nothing would stand in your way either. Certainly not a little blizzard. And that's what happened Sunday as the Carnival Pride sailed away from Baltimore on time - 5:30 p.m. and with only 60 no-shows.

The ship was packed with more than 2,200 passengers, said Carnival spokeswoman Jennifer de la Cruz. She gives all of the credit for the success of the departure to the Port of Baltimore.

"Would not have been possible without a really extraordinary effort from the [Maryland Port Administration](#)," de la Cruz said Sunday. Port personnel worked 12-hour shifts clearing the snow from parking lots, walkways and the pier.

[Carnival Cruise Lines](#) began sailing year-round from Baltimore last spring. You can sail for 7 days to the Bahamas from about \$649 per person. There's availability for the Feb. 21 cruise. If you want a vacation without the risk of your flight being canceled for bad weather, this seems a good bet.

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The Port of Baltimore has personnel working 12-hour shifts to clear parking lots, walkways and piers of snow in preparation for the Sunday return of the Carnival Pride cruise ship.

"It's a challenge for us right now at the terminal," said Richard Scher, Maryland Port Administration spokesman, in a phone interview Saturday. "It's like climbing a slippery slope. We need that snow to slow down or stop to make significant moves."

Scher said the port has about 23 inches of snow on the ground and is using about 20 pieces of snow-removal.

"It's all hands on deck," he said.

As of now, Scher said, the Carnival Pride is still scheduled to arrive in Baltimore early Sunday morning from a cruise to the Bahamas. The ship is expected to load food, water, supplies - and some 2,100 guests - before embarking on another 5-night cruise, set to leave the port at 5:30 p.m. Sunday.

This would be the second time that the cruise ship has been affected by winter weather since [Carnival Cruise Lines](#) began offering cruises year-round from Baltimore last spring. During December's winter storm, the ship delayed its departure by several hours.

Scher said beyond the port, cruise-goers may be affected by cancellations and delays at Baltimore Washington Thurgood Marshall Airport, as well as how quickly state highways and roads are cleared. He said guests headed to the port should allow enough travel time, based on where they are coming from. As for those passengers returning from

the Bahamas, Scher said "they may want to get back on the ship."

*By Michelle Deal Zimmerman*