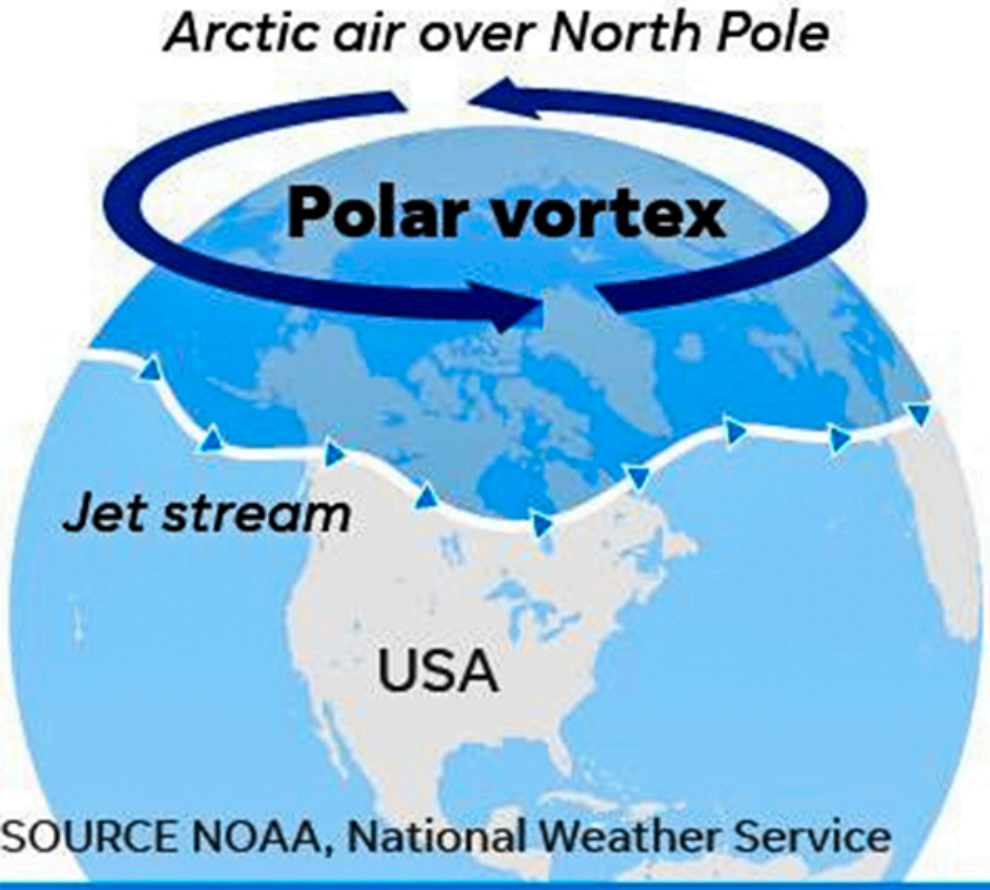
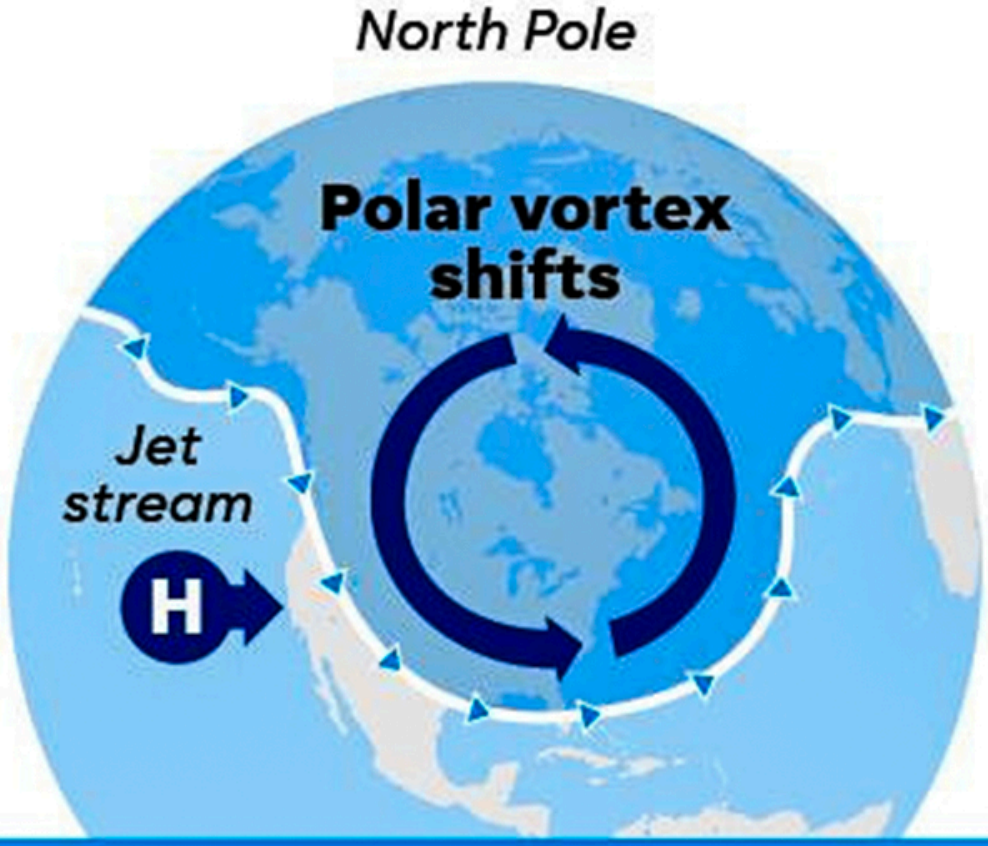
What is the polar vortex?

The polar vortex is a large area of cold air high up in the atmosphere. It normally spins above the North Pole.

A chunk of the polar vortex sometimes slides down toward the U.S. This helps funnel bitterly cold Arctic air over the central and eastern U.S.





SOURCE NOAA, National Weather Service