

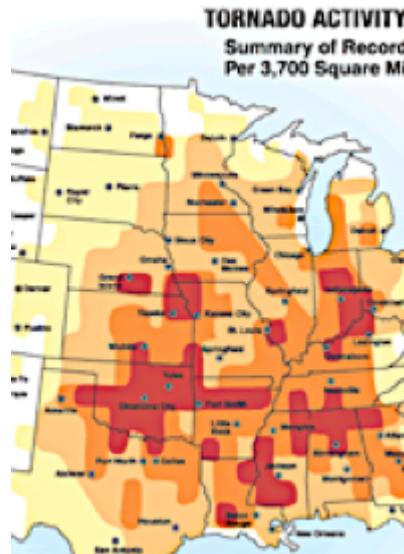


Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 25, 2011

Storms Devastate South and Midwest

Tornadoes and violent storms continue to sweep across the nation killing innocent victims in its path. On Tuesday and early Wednesday morning, at least 13 people were killed after several tornadoes touched down in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kansas. These storms are in addition to the massive tornado that claimed the lives of 122 people in the city of Joplin, Missouri, over the weekend.

In Oklahoma City, several tornadoes struck during rush hour, killing at least five people, including a young child, and injuring 60 others. According to a weather-monitoring site in El Reno, winds reached as high as 151 miles per hour.



Two people died when winds brought a tree down on a van in St. John, Kansas, around 6 p.m.

At least three people died as a result of storms in Franklin and Johnson counties in Arkansas, while a number of others were injured.

Storms continue to batter these portions of the United States, including Joplin, Missouri, which is still recovering from the devastation brought on by the deadliest tornado recorded in U.S. history, according to the National Weather Service.

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin remarks, "Unfortunately, this event will likely continue for some time. I am asking all Oklahomans to stay aware of the weather and to take proper precautions to keep themselves out of harm's way."

The Storm Prediction Center issued warnings over the weekend that tornadoes were possible in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. As a result, residents of Oklahoma had ample time to seek proper shelter.

Michelann Ooten, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, explains, "We knew for the last two days that we had an opportunity for long-tracking tornadoes, and unfortunately that came true today."

On Sunday, a massive tornado devastated [Southwestern Missouri](#), resulting in property damage that has yet to be determined and death. The twister was a half-mile wide, and had estimated speeds of 190-198 miles per hour. Estimates by the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency indicate it wreaked havoc on approximately 10 to 30 percent of Joplin and destroyed roughly 2,000 structures.

A group of volunteers in Joplin provoked cheers on Tuesday afternoon as they embarked on a search and rescue mission after they heard a victim had just been found alive. Chris Powers, a 21-year old ROTC cadet, lead the group and instructed, "Turn over every single thing. We're looking for bodies. But be respectful. These are people's lives."

Houses marked with a red "X" indicate that a search team has already been there.



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Unfortunately, Newton County Coroner Mark Bridges predicts that the death toll will continue to rise. "We're getting more bodies," he said. "We've been running calls [to pick up bodies] all morning."

Nurse Allen Overturf of the Freeman West Medical Center reports that the hospital has been flooded with injured people and patients from St. John's hospital, whose roof had been ripped off as a result of the storm.

Overturf states that victims arrived at the hospital "with brains exposed, vertebrae exposed, amputations."

Storm survivor Tommy Carpenter recalls his miraculous encounter with the storm. Taking refuge in a Walmart Super Center, Carpenter found himself holding a three-month old boy named Greyson. Carpenter recalls what happened when the tornado hit: "I glanced up to see the ceiling tiles flapping up and down. Then I saw daylight." According to Carpenter, he and others began sliding down the aisle of the store, as the tornado being pulling them. Carpenter explains that people were screaming, and as he clutched the baby boy in his arms, he asked God not to take them. Miraculously, he and the child were unharmed.

Missouri's State Emergency Management Agency is encouraging those who cannot physically volunteer to donate funds to support disaster relief efforts.

Map of tornado activity, with red areas experiencing more frequent severe storms.



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