

TORNADO INFORMATION...

WHERE TORNADOES CAN OCCUR:

Any place in the United States at any time of the year. They happen most frequently in the midwestern, southern, and central States from March through September.

HOW OFTEN DO THEY OCCUR:

The average number of days with tornadoes per year, based on records of recent years, ranged from 41 in Texas to less than 1 per year in States of the Northeast and Far West.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A TORNADO:

Usually a funnel-shaped cloud, spinning rapidly, and extending toward the earth from the base of a thundercloud. When close by, it sounds like the roar of hundreds of airplanes.

TORNADO "WEATHER":

Hot, sticky days with southerly winds and a threatening, ominous sky. However, many such days occur without tornadoes.

CLOUDS:

Familiar thunderstorm clouds are present. An hour or two before a tornado, topsy-turvy clouds appear sometimes bulging down instead of up. The clouds often have a greenish-black color.

PRECIPITATION:

Rain, frequently hail, preceding the tornado, with a heavy downpour after it has passed.

TIME OF DAY:

Mostly between 3 and 7 p.m. but tornadoes have occurred at all hours.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL:

In most cases they move from a westerly direction, usually from the southwest.

LENGTH OF PATH:

Usually 10 to 40 miles (the average length is 13 miles), but they may move forward for 300 miles.

WIDTH OF PATH:

The average width is about 250 yards, but they have cut swaths over a mile in width.

SPEED OF TRAVEL:

25 to 40 miles per hour average, but they have varied from stationary to 68 miles per hour.

WIND SPEED:

Estimated more than 300 miles per hour within the tornado.

CAUSES OF DESTRUCTION:

- (1) Violent winds which uproot trees, destroy buildings, and which create a serious hazard from objects blown through the air.
- (2) Differences in air pressure which can lift people and automobiles and can cause buildings to collapse.