



THE OKLAHOMA-KANSAS TORNADOES OF MAY 3, 1999

NOAA RESEARCH
SAVES LIVES



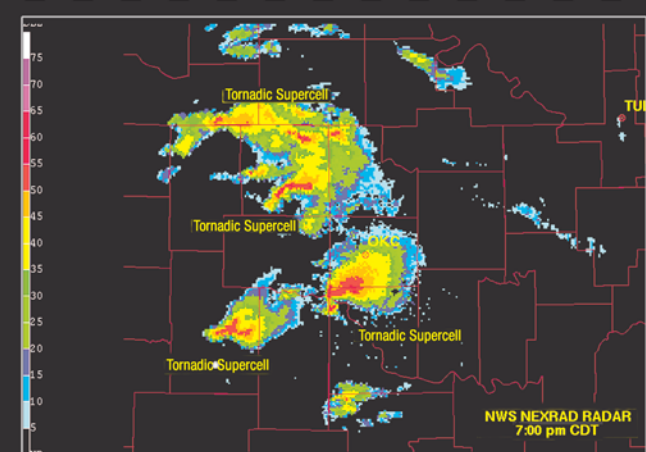
TORNADO!

A total of 74 tornadoes touched down across the two states in less than 21 hours, with as many as four tornadoes on the ground at the same time. The strongest tornado, rated a maximum F-5 on the Fujita Tornado Scale, tracked for 38 miles along a path from Chickasha through the south Oklahoma City suburbs of Bridge Creek, Newcastle, Moore, Midwest City and Del City. As the skies cleared, the states counted 46 dead and 800 injured, more than 8,000 homes damaged or destroyed, and total property damage of nearly \$1.5 billion.

Despite these grim statistics, losses were significantly lessened by applied knowledge and new technologies developed through years of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research. Scientists at the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Oklahoma and the Forecast Systems Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado helped develop some of the primary tools used by the National Weather Service to identify and predict severe weather, including the NEXRAD Doppler radar, the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System, the Warning Decision Support System and NOAA's Profiler Network. NOAA researchers estimate that more than 600 lives were saved as a result of timely and accurate warnings and the public's knowledge of tornado safety.

TORNADO SAFETY TIPS

- ! Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or commercial radio/television for tornado warnings and instructions.
- ! If you hear a "Tornado Warning" or a storm threatens, seek shelter immediately in a pre-designated shelter or basement.
- ! If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room, hallway, bathroom, closet, or under a stairwell on the lowest floor. Get under a sturdy piece of furniture. Avoid windows.
- ! Most mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection and should be abandoned.
- ! If you are in an area where debris is flying or the tornado is approaching, get out of your vehicle and into sturdy shelter. If you are directly in the path of the tornado, do not attempt to outrun it.
- ! If caught outside, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression. The areas under overpasses should only be used as a last resort.



For more information on tornadoes and severe weather, visit these home pages:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, <http://www.noaa.gov>

National Severe Storms Laboratory <http://www.nssl.noaa.gov>

Forecast Systems Laboratory <http://www.fsl.noaa.gov>

