

# Oaklahoma tornado

Profession



On Monday May 20th, 2013 a devastating tornado ripped through the small town of Moore, Oklahoma. This tornado was part of an outbreak of tornados that began in the plains on the 19th. Many towns were affected by Monday's tornado however Moore got the brute of it. Moore is just 20 minutes south of Oklahoma City. The final death toll is 24 people; this was considered a miracle considering the amount of damage. Many rescue crews worked day and night to try to save as many people as they could. Everyone had to work together for it to be organized. Moore, Oklahoma is a town of 55, 000 people.

The first tornado warning was issued at exactly 2: 40pm. This was 16 minutes before touch down of the massive twister. An average warning only goes out 8-10 minutes before a tornado. During this massive tornado outbreak, 28 tornados were reported touching down in the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Illinois and Iowa. Tornados are rated on how severe they are on a scale called the Enhanced Fujita Scale, which is named after the man who invented it, Dr. Theodore Fujita. The Enhanced Fujita Scale goes from EF-0 (light damage) to EF-5 (incredible damage). EF-0 tornados are 65-85mph (105-137km/h) winds.

EF-5 tornados are greater than 200mph (322km/h) winds. The national weather service originally classified the tornado that tore through Moore as an EF-4, but later changed it to an EF-5. This tornado was 2 miles wide at its widest point and traveled a 17 mile long path. Authorities said this was the deadliest tornado in the United States since 161 people died in Missouri 2 years ago. Over 13, 000 homes were damaged or destroyed by this life shattering tornado. Originally 51 people were reported dead directly from the tornado and injuries sustained from it.

That number later dropped to 24 people. It was said that bodies were counted multiple times in the field and reported but the official number came from the coroner's office. Out of those 24 dead, 9 of them were children. 7 of those 9 children came were at the Plaza Tower Elementary school when it was turned to rubble. The Plaza Tower Elementary was smashed by the tornado sending many to the hospital. Hospital staff worked around the clock and called many extra workers in to help the overwhelming amount of people coming in. 299 were reported to be seen at any area hospitals. Moore Medical Center was evacuated after it was damaged from the storm.

All patients were sent to either Norman Regional Hospital or Healthplex Hospital. Between those two 80 patients were seen for various traumatic injuries. Oklahoma University Medical Center treated 93 patients, 59 children and 34 adults. They treated injuries from minor cuts and lacerations to impalements and open fractures. St. Anthony Hospital treated 36 patients, 14 of them being children. They also transferred 3 patients to another hospital because of their injuries. 0 patients were reported to be seen at Integris Southwest Medical Center for trauma related injuries. On Tuesday 60 patients remained hospitalized following Monday's tornado. Hospital staff worked nonstop to get done what needed to be done and to get people healed. Countless amounts of people came from all over to help. Some of the first to arrive were the first responders. Firefighters, EMS crews, police officers, the military and many more had to work together in a race against the clock looking for survivors and getting the injured help. Oklahoma army and air guard troops were activated to help search.

Fire crews from all over Oklahoma came to help including the fire crew from Tinker Air Force base, which is the closest base to the affected area. 80 National Guard members were deployed for search and rescue. Because of the mass amounts of people coming to help the roads were packed. State Highway Patrol asked people not involved in search and rescue to stay off the roads so emergency responders can do their job. Firefighters used thermal imaging cameras (TIC) to find victims trapped in the rubble. Because crews worked all night the cameras helped see when it was too dark.

The National Guard had other specialized equipment to also help. One of the first places searched was the Plaza Tower elementary. Rescuers pulled many children unharmed from the school and took them to a triage center set up in the parking lot. Cadaver dogs were used to sniff for survivors trapped in the rubble. At dawn new search and rescue teams moved switching out with 200 or so emergency responders who worked tirelessly all night. Moore fire Chief, Gary Bird said they were going to search every building “ at least 3 times”. After 24 hours he said he was confident there were no more survivors or bodies.

After a place or car was searched they were parked with a red X. An incident command system is needed in place of every disaster. In the case of a tornado everything needs to be smooth. The command post has to be located in the right spot. It must have good communication abilities and enough space for everyone to work. The command post should set up a place to receive 911 calls directly so they can quickly assign recon teams to where they are needed. It is also a good idea to have a TV at the post so

they can watch what the news helicopters are covering and where needs the most attention.

The Fire Department had an important role in the entire process. They have the tools and equipment to extract victims and 4x4 vehicles to access areas that others can not. EMS of course is very important. They were limited emergency treatment and transport so they did not become engaged in long rescues and so more patients can be seen in the hospital. EMT's were limited to triage so the more advanced paramedics can do more treating en-route to the hospital. The police played a major role which was perimeter control. Many people wanted to see the damage which was getting in the way of workers.

They also had to keep people back because of the hazards from downed power lines and natural gas leaks. Everyone that came to help played a role that was beneficial to everyone. This tornado was a terrible disaster. Mother Nature is a powerful thing and should never be underestimated. Everyone affected by this tornado is never going to forget this, but they all will get past it. The town of Moore will be rebuilt and stronger than before. All hospital staff will remember this day as one of the busiest days of their career. Incident command systems are always needed to be set up ASAP to get everything handled correctly and fluidly.