

**Storm-Related Mortality, Dallas County, Texas  
May 5-12, 1995**

On May 5, 1995, a line of violent thunderstorms moved into Dallas County (estimated 1995 population of 2,019,133) between 8:00 and 8:15 p.m., rapidly overwhelming public services within the Dallas area; a flash flood warning was issued at 8:56 p.m. Preliminary property damages were estimated to be near \$500 million.

Twenty deaths (10 male, 10 female) were directly or indirectly related to the storm. Decedents ranged in age from 2 years to 78 years (mean: 40 years).

Seventeen of the 20 deaths (85%) were directly related to the storm. Drowning was the cause of death for 94% (16/17) of these victims; one person was struck by lightning and electrocuted. Of the deaths where circumstances were known, sixty-three percent (12/19) occurred because a motor vehicle was driven into high water and all of these deaths were due to drowning. Two deaths occurred to pedestrians attempting to cross flooded streets; one individual drowned attempting to rescue two others from high water.

Three of the 20 deaths (15%) were indirectly related to the storm. Among these deaths, two persons were killed when a roof, weakened by excessive rain accumulation, collapsed on them; and one person died from asphyxiation in a house fire caused by misuse of matches during a storm-induced power outage.

Of 19 victims with known times of death, 14 (74%) died within the ninety-minute period 9:00-10:30 p.m. on the evening of May 5, including 42% (8) who died between 9:30 and 9:59 p.m.

Approximately 20 minutes passed from the time the flash flood warning was issued before the first drowning incident occurred. The majority of drownings occurred at locations where flooding does not normally occur and where barricades were not in place. Only one of the drowning deaths were known to occur when an individual disregarded roadway barricades.

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