



United States Tornadoes of 2012*

*Updated Jan. 6, 2013 and subject to revision.

Comparisons are made for the 62-year period 1950-2011 unless otherwise noted. The official NOAA/NWS period of record for tornadoes in the United States extends back to 1950. Fatality records for significant tornado events prior to 1950 are used for historical comparison. Tornado numbers from January through October, 2012 are derived from Storm Data while numbers for November through December are preliminary estimates based on NWS Public Statements and Local Storm Reports.

First Tornado.....8:45 AM CST, 9-Jan (EF0-TX)
Last Tornado.....5:00 PM EST, 26-Dec (EF1-NC)

2012 Total Tornadoes.....936 (Ranked 25th since 1950)
Record Annual Total.....1817 in 2004

Greatest 2012 Monthly Total.....206 in April
Greatest Monthly Total on Record.....759 in April 2011

2012 Tornado Days.....170
Annual Average.....178 (50-years, 1962-2011)
Record Tornado Days in Any Year.....211 in 2000

Greatest 2012 Daily Total (Mid-Mid CST).....86 on 14-Apr
Greatest Daily Total on Record.....200 on 27-Apr-2011

States Reporting Tornadoes in 2012.....46
Annual Average Number of States.....43 (50-years, 1962-2011)
Most States Reporting Tornadoes in Any Year.....48 (2011 and 1989)

2012 Tornado Deaths.....68 (Ranked 25th since 1950)
Annual Average Tornado Deaths.....91 (62-years, 1950-2011)
2011 Tornado Deaths.....553 (Ranked 2nd in History)
Greatest Annual Number of Tornado Deaths.....794 (1925)

2012 Tornado Injuries.....829 (Ranked 43rd since 1950)
Greatest Annual Number of Injuries.....6824 in 1974

2012 Deadliest Single Tornado.....Henryville, IN (11, 2-Mar)
Record Deadliest Single Tornado (modern era).....Joplin, MO, 158, 22-May-2011

2012 Longest Track.....85 miles (KY-WV, 2-Mar)
Record Longest Track.....235 miles (LA-MS, 22-Mar-1953)

2012 Tornadoes Rated EF4.....4 (Fewest since 2 in 2009)
Record Annual Number.....36 in 1974

2012 Tornadoes Rated EF5 (200+mph).....0 (Fewest since 0 in 2010)
Record Annual Number of EF5 Tornadoes.....7 in 1974

2012 Estimated Property and Crop Losses.....~1.6 billion USD
2011 Estimated Property and Crop Losses.....~10.0 billion USD (Ranked 1st)
Greatest Losses from Single Tornado.....~2.8 billion USD (Joplin, MO)

Statistics compiled by Gregory.Carbin.at.noaa.gov, NOAA/NWS/Storm Prediction Center,

www.spc.noaa.gov

2012 U.S. Tornadoes: Active Early Followed by Record Low Activity
Greg Carbin, SPC

The last year with fewer than 936 tornadoes was 2002 when 934 tornadoes were reported. The annual average number of tornadoes over the past 30 years (1982-2011) is 1146. Thus, 2012 will have an annual tornado total of about 80% of normal.

The past year stands in contrast to 2011 when record levels of violent and deadly tornadoes occurred (over 140% of the 30 year normal). Intra-annual variability in tornadoes also appears in 2012. The first few months of 2012 had above normal tornado activity when compared to the rest of 2012 (see table). Through April 2012, the U.S. tornado count was nearly double the 30 year normal (496 tornadoes compared to a 30 year average of 287 tornadoes).

Significant tornado outbreaks in 2012 occurred on 22-23 January (25 tornadoes), 28-29 February (44 tornadoes), 2-3 March (75 tornadoes), 14-15 April (98 tornadoes), and 25 December (preliminary count of 28 tornadoes). Days with significant widespread tornado activity decreased considerably after the mid-April outbreak and April 2012 was only the third April since 1980 to experience a greater monthly tornado total than the subsequent months of May or June (this most recently occurred in 2011 and 2006). In contrast, the 440 tornadoes during the remaining eight months of 2012 (May through December) was 420 tornadoes short of the 30 year normal of 860 tornadoes (average sum for the months of May-December, 1982-2011). Even though tornadoes made a comeback during December 2012, with the preliminary monthly total of 51 being nearly double the 30 year December average of 25 tornadoes, the U.S. tornado count for the final eight months of 2012 will be around 50% of normal.

It is evident when reviewing 2011 and 2012 that tornado counts can vary considerably from year to year and even month to month. In addition, weak tornadoes (those rated EF0) have increased over the past 20 years and make up more than half of all tornado reports in recent years. Variability in tornado occurrence and the increase in weak tornado reports due to improved public awareness and detection technologies such as Doppler radar, make tornado trend analysis a challenge. About 60% of the tornadoes in 2012 were rated EF0 with winds in the range of 65-85 mph. When these weak tornadoes are subtracted from 2012 total, the remaining 375 EF1 and stronger tornadoes will place 2012 among some of the least active years in the past 60 years. The table below shows the preliminary monthly breakdown and departures from the 30 year (1982-2011) averages for all tornadoes occurring in 2012.

2012	Tornadoes	Departure	Deaths	Departure	Injuries	Departure	Losses (M)	Departure
Jan	79	52	2	0	99	65	\$25.5	-\$12.6
Feb	57	28	15	9	206	135	\$34.3	-\$46.8
Mar	154	81	41	32	324	160	\$307.4	\$149.9
Apr	206	48	6	-16	117	-168	\$1,227.5	\$761.3
May	121	-134	0	-19	11	-251	\$4.6	-\$475.2
Jun	110	-111	4	1	9	-69	\$8.4	-\$241.5
Jul	37	-83	0	-1	1	-30	\$1.1	-\$167.4
Aug	38	-38	0	-2	4	-42	\$1.9	-\$97.3
Sep	39	-24	0	-1	1	-24	\$1.4	-\$71.3
Oct	37	-11	0	-1	25	2	\$10.6	-\$51.0
Nov	7	-46	0	-7	0	-130	\$5	-\$112.5
Dec	51	26	0	-2	32	-1	\$15.0	-\$35.2
Annual	936	-210	68	-6	829	-354	\$1,638.2	-\$399.5