

## Tornadoes

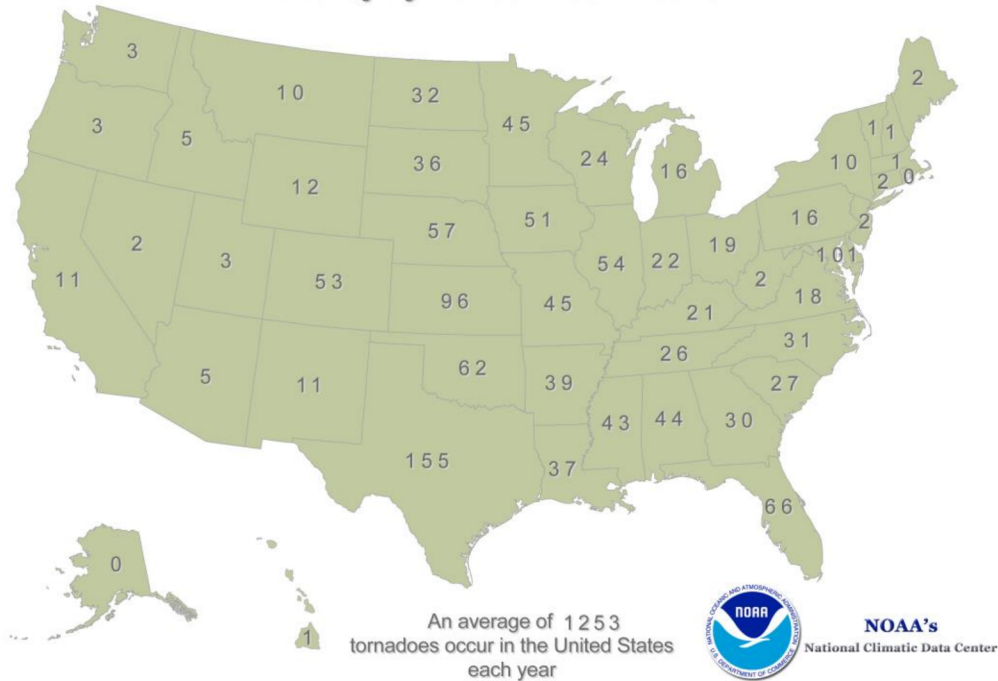
The National Weather Service defines a tornado as a “violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground.” Among other natural hazards, tornadoes can be one of the most destructive. According to statistics from the Storm Prediction Center, 76 deaths occurred in 2020 due to tornadoes. Additionally, about 1,200 tornadoes hit the United States on a yearly basis.

While meteorologists cannot determine all the exact causes of tornadoes, it’s been shown that they develop from supercells, which are rotating thunderstorms. Supercells, which can also produce hail, damaging wind, lightning, and flash floods, are defined by well-defined radar circulation, known as a mesocyclone.

Several factors make tornadoes so dangerous. Some of these include wind speeds up to 300 MPH, as well as the swiftness with which they develop. Tornadoes can give little advanced warning, especially at night. In addition, tornadoes can come from any direction. While they do display directional tendencies, some tornadoes have been observed to change direction mid-path.

### Average Annual Number of Tornadoes

Averaging Period: 1991 - 2010



Source: <https://www1.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/cmb/images/tornado/clim/ann-avg-torn1991-2010.gif>