

National Weather Service Office Tampa Bay Area

Ruskin, FL

Official Damage Survey Report for the North Fort Myers Tornado that occurred the afternoon of June 8th, 2008.

The National Weather Service office in Ruskin, FL dispatched a team consisting of Lead Forecasters Nicholas Petro and Michael Cantin, along with student trainee Andrew Kennedy to North Fort Myers on June 9th, 2008 to assess the damage generated by a tornado that struck the area between 4:45pm and 5:45pm EDT on June 8th, 2008.

Storms moved into the Ft. Myers area by early afternoon as a convergent band downstream of Lake Okeechobee moved into the area. This band of convection was further intensified when it interacted with the Gulf Coast sea breeze present over the area. As the tornado producing storm intensified it pulled the circulation present along the sea breeze into its updraft and spun up the tornado. The storm traveled northward along the sea breeze generating brief tornado touchdowns along its path as it continued to interact with the low level circulation. Finally, the storm weakened just as it crossed out of Lee County into Charlotte County.

The main goal of the survey team was to assign a tornado rating based upon wind speeds estimated from the damage. The survey team would like to thank Lee County Emergency Management for taking them on a tour of the impacted areas, as well as residents who allowed the team to inspect the damage to their property.

During the tour a total of 5 locations were visited where team members inspected damage and looked for visual clues of wind speed. At each location photos were taken, and damage was inspected to identify the type and extent of damage, as well as the type/quality of construction. In addition, team members interviewed area residents to pin down the timing of when the tornado moved through.

The survey team concluded that the tornado that moved through the area was a high end EF(0) tornado with isolated pockets of EF(1) rated damage. This would place wind speed estimates for the tornado between 75 to 100 mph, with the majority of wind estimates between 75-85mph.

Further information is available about the EF or Enhanced Fujita Scale at: <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/efscale/>. This scale is different than the previously used Fujita Scale in that it factors in structural integrity and construction into wind speed estimates.

Below are a sampling of pictures of the tornado and damage. All damage photos were taken by the *National Weather Service Tampa Bay Area Survey Team*.



Image courtesy WBBH-TV



For more forecast and other weather information provided by the National Weather Service Tampa Bay Area, please visit www.weather.gov/tampa.