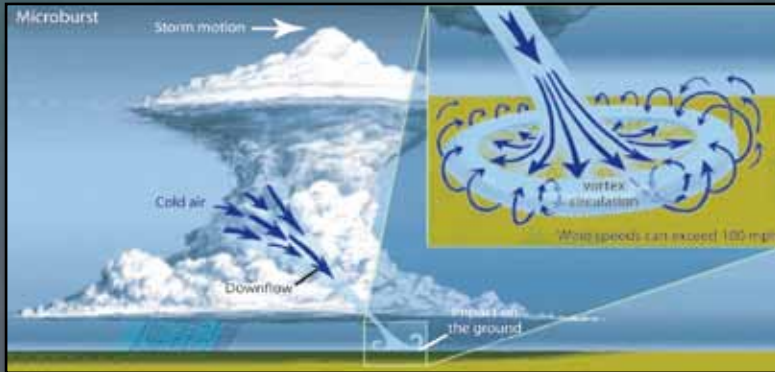


DAMAGING WIND

Each year in Alabama, damaging wind events occur ten to 20 times more often than tornadoes. Often times, initial reports of significant storm damage are erroneously attributed to tornadoes, when strong, straight-line winds are actually responsible. Straight-line winds are damaging winds from a thunderstorm which are not associated with rotation. These winds can reach speeds above 100 mph with a damage path extending many miles. Trees and power lines can be knocked down. Mobile homes over turned. Well-built structures, such as homes and office buildings, damaged.



Perry County, Mar 9, 2011



Etowah County, Feb 24, 2011

A downburst is one type of damaging, straight-line wind, which typically occurs during the summer months in single-cell afternoon thunderstorms. Downbursts develop quickly and are very difficult to detect. They can occur with little or no advance notice and can be accompanied by a loud roar. As a result, downbursts are often mistaken as tornadoes. Wind speeds associated with downbursts usually exceed 60 mph and rarely exceed 100 mph. Microbursts, spatially small downbursts, can produce winds stronger than 100 mph.

During any type of severe weather, do not put yourself in a situation where an appropriate shelter is not available. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or another information source for continuous updates. When severe weather is approaching, limit outdoor activities. Remain close to a sturdy shelter.

HAIL

Although hail forms in every thunderstorm, it only reaches the ground if atmospheric conditions are favorable. Hail typically has the best chance of falling to the ground in springtime thunderstorms, when the atmosphere is colder, especially at mid and high levels. Hail may take on many different sizes and shapes, such as a thin flat penny or a baseball.

Large hail can be very dangerous. It can cause damage to objects, such as motor vehicles, structures, and trees. Bodily injuries, or even deaths, can result if people are caught outdoors when large hail occurs.



Courtesy of Danny Lloyd
Tallapoosa County, Mar 26, 2011



Dekalb County, Mar 12, 2010