

Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Hastings NE
500 PM CDT Mon May 18 2026

...NWS Damage Survey for May 17, 2026 Tornado Event...

.Overview...Three tornadoes occurred on Sunday in south central Nebraska. The following is a summary of each event. The National Weather Service would like to thank the Howard County Emergency Manager, Thayer County Emergency Manager, spotters, local authorities and many others who provided information for this survey.

.Rural Southwest Howard County Tornado...

Rating:	EF-U
Estimated Peak Wind:	Undetermined
Path Length /statute/:	Brief Touchdown
Path Width /maximum/:	Undetermined
Fatalities:	0
Injuries:	0
Start Date:	5/17/2026
Start Time:	4:51 PM CDT
Start Location:	5 SSW Dannebrog / Howard / NE
Start Lat/Lon:	41.0535 / -98.5843
End Date:	5/17/2026
End Time:	4:51 PM CDT
End Location:	5 SSW Dannebrog / Howard / NE
End Lat/Lon:	41.0535 / -98.5843

Survey Summary: This tornado was brief and reported first by local media, which was followed by a second report. No damage was found or reported. A rating of EF-U was applied due to the lack of damage indicators to make a wind speed estimation.

.Saint Libory Tornado...

Rating:	EF-3
Estimated Peak Wind:	160 mph
Path Length /statute/:	6.09 miles
Path Width /maximum/:	350 yards
Fatalities:	0
Injuries:	0
Start Date:	05/17/2026
Start Time:	05:04 PM CDT
Start Location:	4 NW St. Libory / Howard County / NE
Start Lat/Lon:	41.1288 / -98.4149
End Date:	05/17/2026
End Time:	05:15 PM CDT
End Location:	4 NE St. Libory / Howard County / NE
End Lat/Lon:	41.1266 / -98.2994

Survey Summary:

This photogenic tornado took a roughly west-to-east trek across southeast Howard county north of St. Libory for about 11 minutes. The tornado came together quickly on the edge of a farmstead west of Highway 281 where some small outbuildings were destroyed and many trees damaged. As it moved east, it quickly snapped power poles and moved across Highway 281 about 1.9 miles north of the Highway 58 intersection.

East of Highway 281, the tornado continued to strengthen as it rolled into a rural housing development. Four dwellings were essentially destroyed. At least two more detached garage type structures were destroyed. Residents who where home at the time took shelter after receiving tornado warning information and seeing the tornado approach. Video evidence suggests two homes likely took a direct hit from the tornado. Power poles were snapped and a pivot nearby was tumbled over and broken into several pieces.

From there, the tornado powered east through a grove of trees while also damaging power poles, fencing and exhibiting ground scouring. Eventually, damage became less widespread and intense in nature. The tornado lifted just prior to the Merrick County line about 4 miles northeast of St. Libory.

This tornado was rated a high-end EF-3 with estimated maximum windspeed of around 160 mph based upon the home damage.

.Hebron South Side Tornado...

Rating: EF-1
Estimated Peak Wind: 95 mph
Path Length /statute/: 4.25 miles
Path Width /maximum/: 200 yards
Fatalities: 0
Injuries: 0

Start Date: 05/17/2026
Start Time: 06:42 PM CDT
Start Location: 3 SW Hebron / Thayer County / NE
Start Lat/Lon: 40.1391 / -97.6398

End Date: 05/17/2026
End Time: 06:53 PM CDT
End Location: 1 ESE Hebron / Thayer County / NE
End Lat/Lon: 40.1616 / -97.5665

Survey Summary:

The Hebron tornado started with estimated EF-0 level damage to tree limbs near the Spring Creek, approximately 3.5 miles southwest of town. It intensified to an EF-1 as it moved east-northeast, causing trees to be uprooted and the uplift of the roof of a golf cart shed at the Hebron Country Club. The tornado then weakened as it traveled northeast, crossing over the airport before ending on the east-southeast side of town, with the loss of roofing material on a farm shed and additional tree damage near the Little Blue River.

The peak wind was estimated to be about 95 mph based primarily on the tree damage.

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EF Scale: The Enhanced Fujita Scale classifies tornadoes into the following categories:

EF0.....65 to 85 mph
EF1.....86 to 110 mph
EF2.....111 to 135 mph
EF3.....136 to 165 mph
EF4.....166 to 200 mph
EF5.....>200 mph

NOTE:

The information in this statement is preliminary and subject to change pending final review of the events and publication in NWS Storm Data.