Summary of Natural Hazard Statistics for 2012 in the United States

This National Weather Service (NWS) report summarizes fatalities, injuries and damages caused by severe weather in 2012. The NWS Office of Climate, Water and Weather Services and the National Climatic Data Center compiled this Summary of U.S. Natural Hazard Statistics from Storm Data, a report comprising statistics from NWS forecast offices in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

Summary of 2012 Weather Events, Fatalities, Injuries, and Damage Costs

Weather Event	Fatalities	Injuries	Property Damage (million $)	Crop Damage (million $)	Total Damage (million $)
Convection					
Lightning	28	139	47.89	0.45	48.34
Tornado	69	822	1,648.70	1.06	1,649.75
Thunderstorm Wind	50	332	312.14	10.30	322.44
Hail	0	54	2,408.80	93.91	2,502.71
Extreme Temperatures					
Cold	8	0	15.90	221.71	237.61
Heat	156	1062	0.76	11.80	12.56
Flood					
Flash Flood	19	17	379.17	2.26	381.43
River Flood	10	8	119.05	4.97	124.02
Marine					
Coastal Storm	45	1	21,605.50	0.75	21,606.25
Tsunami	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rip Current	42	35	120.12	0.00	120.12
Tropical Cyclones					
Tropical Storm / Hurricane	4	5	174.78	0.11	174.89
Winter					
Winter Storm	10	11	178.08	20.00	198.08
Ice	1	1	7.02	0.00	7.02
Avalanche	23	7	0.00	0.00	0.00

Other					
Drought	0	0	239.83	5,706.12	5,945.95
Dust Storm	0	0	1.53	0.00	1.53
Dust Devil	0	2	0.27	0.00	0.27
Rain	6	18	2.86	0.00	2.86
Fog	0	0	6.51	0.00	6.51
High Wind	54	40	4,061.75	5.88	4,067.63
Waterspout	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fire Weather	10	76	1,460.09	4.47	1,464.56
Mud Slide	1	0	1.74	0.00	1.74
Volcanic Ash	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	2	22	0.11	0.00	0.11
Total	538	2653	32,792.60	6,083.78	38,876.37

Summary of 2012 Natural Hazard Statistics

Weather-related deaths drop dramatically in 2012 to 538, less than half the 2011 total of 1,096 victims but up from 491 in 2010. The 2012 number is below the 10-year average (2002-2011) of 642. Heat replaced tornadoes as the most deadly hazard in 2012, claiming 156 victims, but down from 206 deaths in 2011. Wind was the next most deadly hazard with 104 thunderstorm and high wind fatalities, followed by tornadoes, 69 victims. The tornado fatality total is down dramatically from the 2011 total of 553 and also below the 10-year average of 108.

Of the 2012 weather-related deaths, males again accounted for more deaths 377 (70%), than females, 155 (29%), with 1% unknown. This gender breakdown is typical. In most years, there are almost twice as many male victims of extreme weather as female, a pattern likely reflecting the higher percentage of men who hold outdoor jobs such as construction and who take part in sports and other outside activities such as fishing and boating. In 2012, males were more likely to be victims in all age ranges except the 90+ category, where the percentage of women who reach this age range exceeds that of men.

Which was the deadliest month? In contrast to 2011, when tornadoes blasted April to the top of the list, in 2012, extreme heat pushed July to the top, followed by October with 84 fatalities, many of whom were victims of Hurricane Sandy, and March, which brought more deadly tornadoes.

In 2012, weather related injuries and illnesses numbered 2,653, still much too high but down dramatically from the 2011 total of 8,859. Heat caused the most weather related illnesses with 1,062, down from 2,430 in 2011. Tornadoes took second place with 822 injuries, down significantly from 2011 with 5,483. Thunderstorm winds and other high winds resulted in another 372 injuries.

Which state had the most dangerous weather in 2012? New York, with 58 casualties, took that dubious honor from Alabama, which numbered 250 weather-related fatalities in 2011. A large number of the New York deaths were due to coastal flooding and high winds brought by Hurricane Sandy. Illinois was the next hardest hit, with 47 deaths, most victims of extreme heat. Missouri lost 42 residents, again mostly victims of excessive heat.

Although fatalities were down in 2012, property damage totals were up from 2011. Extreme weather caused approximately $38.9 billion in combined property and crop damages in 2012, up significantly from the 2011 total of $24.2 billion.

Property damages were estimated at $32.8 billion, $12 billion more than what was accumulated in 2011 and more than four and a half times the 2010 total of $7 billion. In 2012, coastal flooding, largely from Hurricane Sandy, caused by far the most property damage: $21.6 billion, followed by high winds and thunderstorms, which caused $5.7 billion in damages, and hail which came in at $2.4 billion.

Crop damages totaled $6.1 billion, with drought far and away the major culprit resulting in $5.7 billion in losses. Extreme cold was a distant second culprit for crop damage with $221 million accrued.

2012 Summary of Fatalities for All Hazards by Age and Gender

	Female	Male	Unknown	Total	Percent
0 to 9	10	20	0	30	5.58
10 to 19	11	28	0	39	7.25
20 to 29	8	36	0	44	8.18
30 to 39	7	31	0	38	7.06
40 to 49	15	36	0	51	9.48
50 to 59	20	72	0	92	17.10
60 to 69	33	43	0	76	14.13
70 to 79	25	44	0	69	12.83
80 to 89	12	23	0	35	6.51
90 to --	9	6	0	15	2.79
Unknown	5	38	6	49	9.11
Total	155	377	6	538	
Percent	28.81	70.07	1.12		

2012 Monthly Weather Related Fatalities