



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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2021 Was An Active Year For Tornadoes in Mississippi

After a record setting year in 2019 and the 5th most active year in 2020, 2021 did not slow down in terms of the number of tornadoes that affected Mississippi. Seventy-six tornadoes occurred in Mississippi during 2021, which ranks sixth since 1950. This year falls behind 2019, which saw a record 115 tornadoes, 2008 (109), 2005 (99), 2011 (97), and 2020 (82). Despite the number of tornadoes, there were no recorded injuries from these and one fatality. While there have been many previous years where one fatality or less occurred, it is much rarer for the injury count to be zero. This has occurred twice before - in 1964 and 1979. Harrison County observed the most tornadoes with 11, due in large part to Hurricane Ida. Lee County recorded seven tornadoes, Hancock County saw five tornadoes and Holmes and Jackson counties each recorded four tornadoes. Many other counties across the state noted anywhere from one to three tornadoes during the course of the year.

There were 41 tornadoes rated as an EF0, 31 rated EF1, and 4 as EF2. There were no tornadoes that rated as EF3, EF4 or EF5 in the state during 2021. This was the first year since 2018 there has not been an EF3 or stronger tornado for the year.

The beginning of the year featured no tornadoes, but instead several winter weather events. This included a snow event in mid-January and the impactful mid-February prolonged arctic invasion and winter storm. This was the first January since 2014 that saw no tornadoes and the first February since 2015 that saw no tornadoes.

Tornado activity increased in March as the region saw back to back weeks with outlooks for a high risk for severe weather. While the worst of the weather occurred in Alabama and locations to our east, the event on March 17th brought nine tornadoes to portions of the state. A handful of events during the week of March 25 through 31 rounded out the month, which in total tallied 18 tornadoes. Three of the four EF2 tornadoes for the year occurred during March. After quite an active April in 2020, it was much quieter in 2021. Five tornadoes occurred in April, most of which were on the 9th.

While April was a bit tamer this year, May was not. Twenty-seven tornadoes occurred in May among three different events. This marked a record for most tornadoes in May since 1950. The first outbreak came on May 2nd, when severe thunderstorms developed south of a warm front that was located across Mississippi. These produced 17 tornadoes in predominantly Central Mississippi. While the majority were rated EF0 and EF1 tornadoes, a strong tornado did affect Carroll and Holmes counties. The second event was on May 4th, when seven tornadoes occurred. During this event, an intense squall line tore through the state, producing widespread wind damage. However, there were also several embedded tornadoes within the squall line.

Typically, the summer months are quiet with respect to tornadic activity. After June 2020 set a record for most tornadoes in the month (8), June 2021 tied for the second most with seven. This previously occurred in 1974. These seven tornadoes occurred during two different events. The first three tornadoes occurred in the month in Lee County, thanks to an upper level storm system that parked across the region. The remainder of the tornadoes occurred along the coastal counties associated with a weak Tropical Storm Claudette that affected portions of southern Mississippi.



Sixteen tornadoes occurred in August, which is second most behind the 27 that occurred in 1992. Two tornadoes affected Tishomingo County during late August, but the bulk of the tornadoes in the month occurred during Hurricane Ida. As Hurricane Ida moved ashore along the Louisiana coast, it spawned fourteen waterspouts that moved inland along the Mississippi coastal counties, most notably Harrison and Hancock counties.

The remainder of the year was fairly quiet in relation to any significant weather systems and subsequently tornadoes. Two tornadoes occurred in southern Mississippi in late October in association with supercell thunderstorms in a warm, moist environment. One fatality occurred in Jackson County during this event on the 27th. The tornado crossed Highway 63 where it interacted with a vehicle. The driver lost control and died after being ejected from the vehicle. This was the only fatality recorded during 2021 from tornadoes.

The final tornado of the year occurred during the early morning hours of December 11th in Prentiss County. This tornado was one of many that affected portions of the Mid-South to Ohio and Tennessee Valleys from the 10th into the 11th. Fortunately, this tornado was weak, being rated an EF1.

For a summary of tornadoes in 2021 by month and EF scale please visit

https://www.weather.gov/jan/ms_tornado_count_2021

For additional information about Mississippi tornadoes since 1950, please visit

http://www.weather.gov/jan/severe_statistics

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