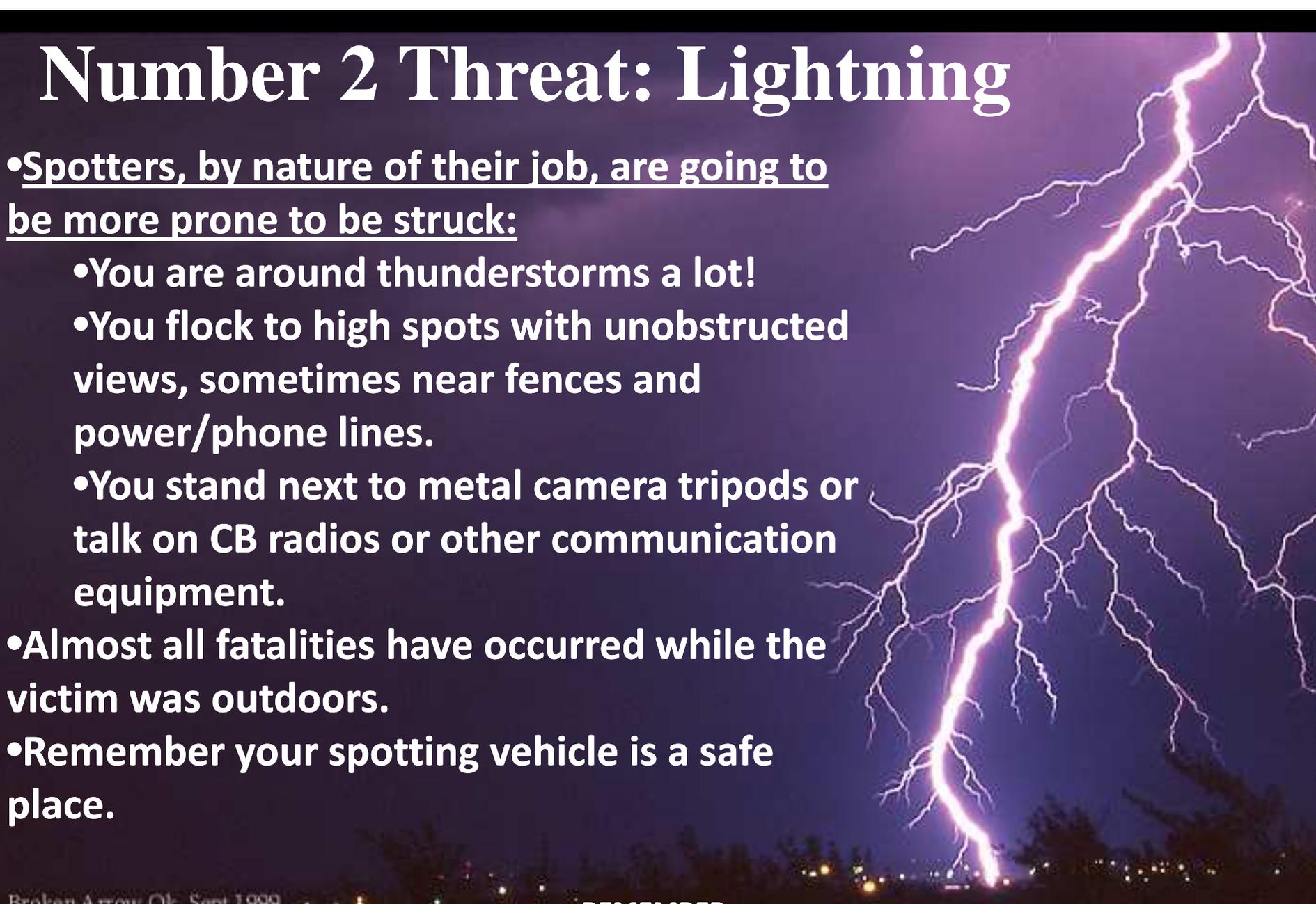


Number 2 Threat: Lightning



• Spotters, by nature of their job, are going to be more prone to be struck:

- You are around thunderstorms a lot!
- You flock to high spots with unobstructed views, sometimes near fences and power/phone lines.
- You stand next to metal camera tripods or talk on CB radios or other communication equipment.
- Almost all fatalities have occurred while the victim was outdoors.
- Remember your spotting vehicle is a safe place.

Broken Arrow Ok Sept 1999
(c) 1999 Dave Crowley www.stormguy.com

REMEMBER:

- ✓ The NWS does NOT issue warnings for lightning!
- ✓ Lightning does NOT make a thunderstorm severe, no matter how vivid, impressive or deadly it is!

Always expect the unexpected



©Curtis McDonald

TornadoVideos.net

Why would this not be a good place to spot from?



Number 3 Threat: The Storm

- Spotters unfamiliar with severe storms simply may not be able to comprehend their danger until it is too late ... smart spotters never take risks near severe storms.
- Severe storms can become unbelievably fierce so fast that you may not have time to respond intelligently.
- Winds of 70 to 100 mph, especially when combined with very large hail will put you in great danger.
- HP supercells often bring very vicious weather, even when they are not tornadic.

Minimize Your Risk!

- Do not core punch a storm! To "core punch" means going through the heavy precipitation/hail core of the storm in order to get into a better position.

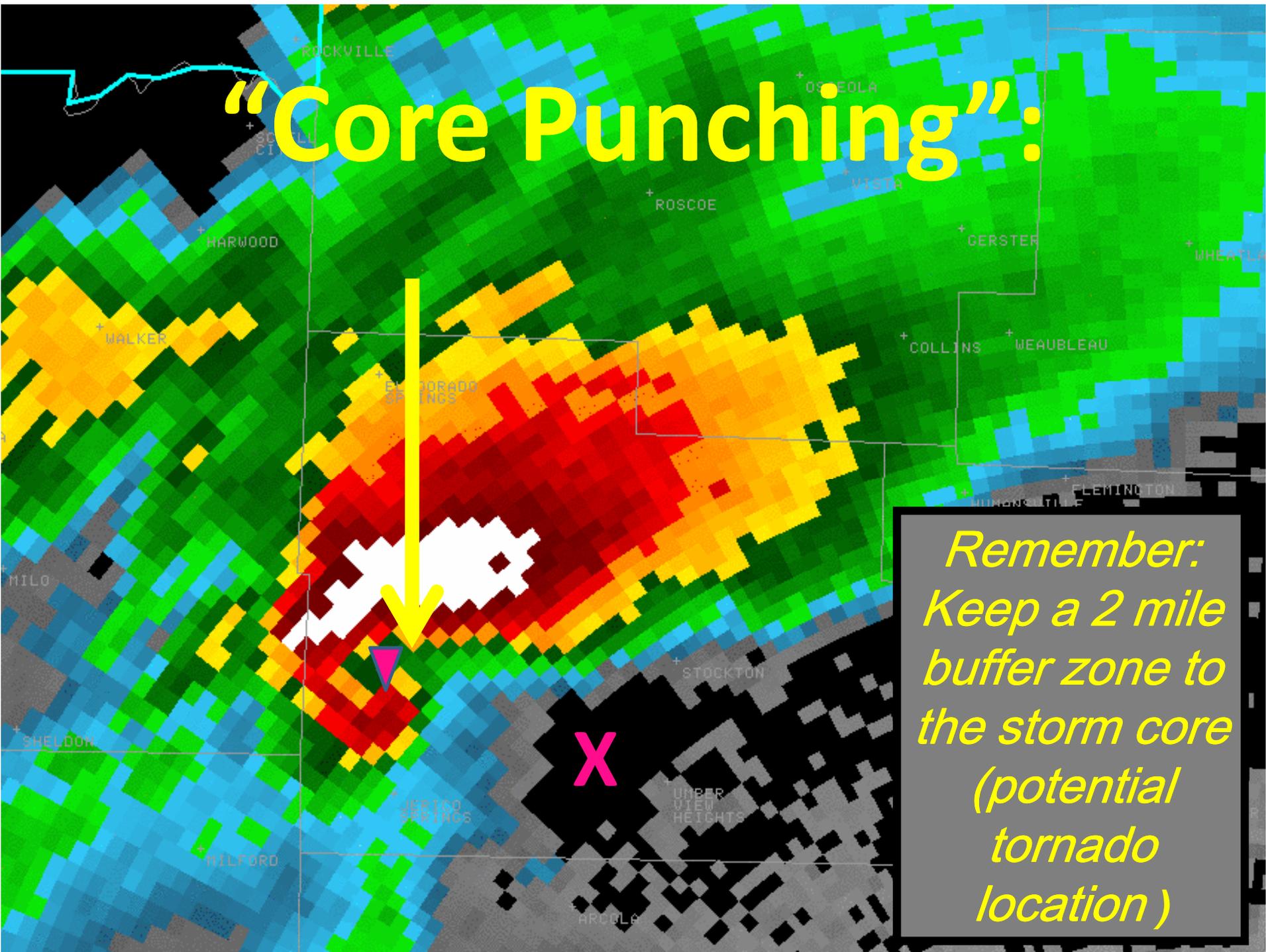
There are several bad things that can happen:

- You can drive into very large hail and seriously damage your vehicle (including losing a windshield).
- In the core, you can have serious problems with rain: slick roads, zero visibility
- If you are driving in rain and you encounter hail that increases in size, stop, back up, and get out of there! You may be driving into a core without even knowing it.

- You can drive out of the rain and hail right into the tornado.

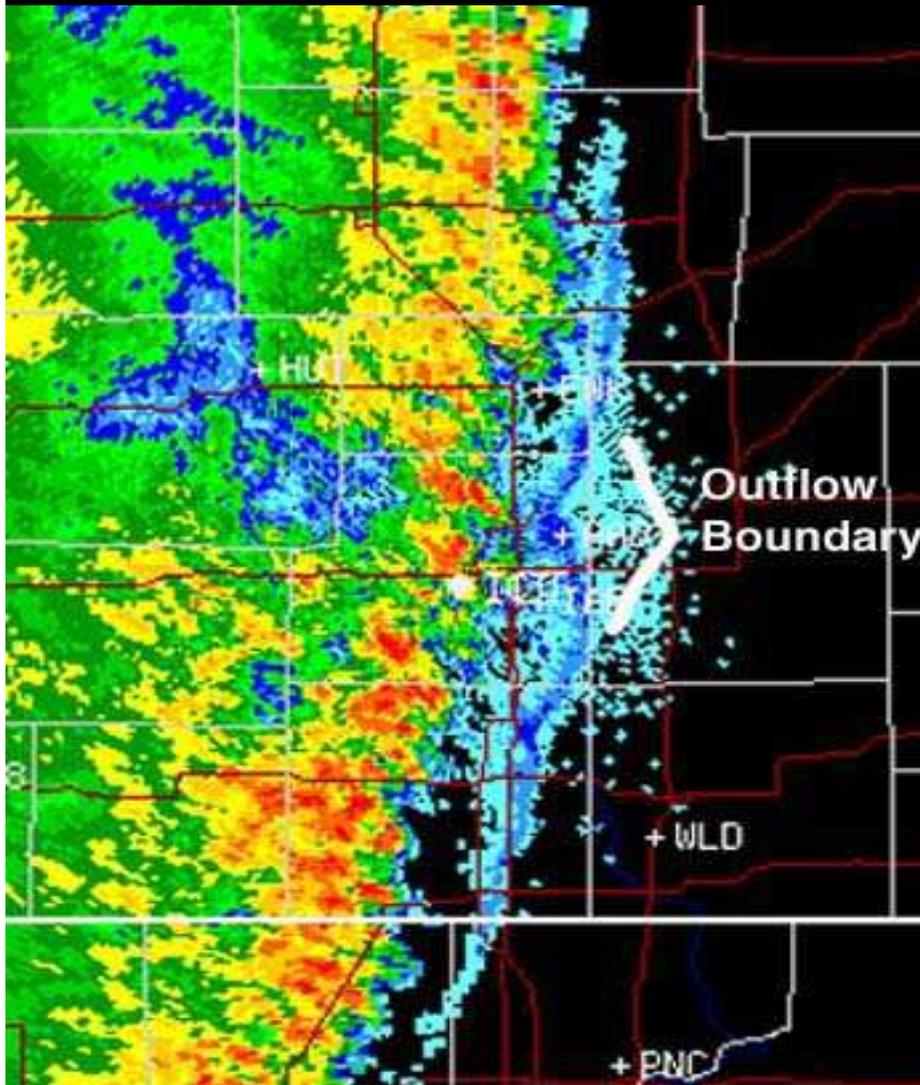


“Core Punching”:



*Remember:
Keep a 2 mile
buffer zone to
the storm core
(potential
tornado
location)*

Leading edge of the storm



When spotting a storm as it approaches (the leading edge) in order to report a wind speed, position yourself with your vehicle pointed directly towards the line, or facing directly away from the line.

Aerodynamics of your vehicle should give you a better chance of staying safe.

Squall lines or bow echoes will have the potential to produce very strong winds, sometimes up to 80-90 mph or even higher in some cases.

Be ready to act quickly and move to a safer location.

Near Valentine NE June 24, 2009



Video courtesy of
Craig McPeck
Snow-day.org

Keep a Keen Eye!

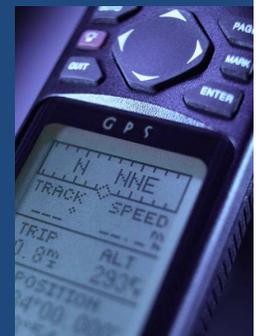
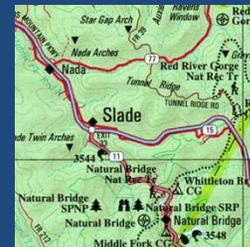
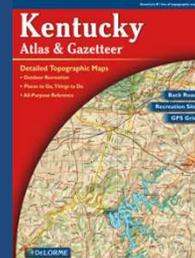
- It's easy to lose focus and become fixated on some feature you're watching - Don't get trapped into looking fixedly at one part of the scene in front of you.
- Maintain awareness of what's going on all around you and always be prepared for a surprise event.
- Keep your head on a swivel and look overhead occasionally, as well as all around.
- Spot with a partner, who can be an extra set of eyes and ears to help you stay safe.





Escape Routes

- Mobile spotters must have planned escape routes.
- It is always a good idea to think about what you might do if you somehow end up trapped.
- Roads and storms can sometimes create situations that you don't expect.
- Maps aren't always accurate, and events can arise for which you didn't plan.
- It is easy to find yourself with no escape route as a storm bears down on you, so always plan ahead and know your area well.
- Know where all your potential shelters are ahead of time.



Getting the heck outta there!



Mike Umscheid

- ❖ Usually, you can see well enough ahead to know what's coming.
- ❖ When the sky is looking especially vicious, follow your gut and head to safety.
 - ❖ A good spotter knows where potential shelters might be located – use them!
 - ❖ If there is time, turn your vehicle around and head the other way.
- ❖ You can always go back to your original location to look for damage to report.
 - ❖ Always be prepared to brace yourself for very high winds
 - ❖ Know what to expect by listening to the warning text

Gett

BULLETIN - EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTED
SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PADUCAH KY
507 PM CST TUE FEB 9 2010

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN PADUCAH HAS ISSUED A

* SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING FOR...
WEST CENTRAL UNION COUNTY IN NORTHWEST KENTUCKY...
SOUTHWESTERN GALLATIN COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
HARDIN COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
NORTHEASTERN JOHNSON COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
NORTHERN POPE COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
SOUTHERN SALINE COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
SOUTHEASTERN WILLIAMSON COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...
NORTHWESTERN CRITTENDEN COUNTY IN WESTERN KENTUCKY...

* UNTIL 545 PM CST.

* AT 505 PM CST...NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DOPPLER RADAR INDICATED A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM CAPABLE OF PRODUCING GOLF BALL SIZE HAIL...AND DESTRUCTIVE WINDS IN EXCESS OF 80 MPH. THIS STORM WAS LOCATED NEAR CARRIERS MILLS...OR 9 MILES SOUTHWEST OF HARRISBURG...AND MOVING EAST AT 30 MPH.

* LOCATIONS IN THE WARNING INCLUDE...
CARRIERS MILLS...

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

THIS IS A DANGEROUS STORM. SEEK SHELTER INDOORS. STAY TUNED TO WEATHER RADIO OR LOCAL MEDIA FOR THE LATEST SEVERE WEATHER INFORMATION.

&&

LAT...LON 3765 8807 3741 8815 3758 8879 3776 8873
TIME...MOT...LOC 2307Z 285DEG 26KT 3764 8864|
WIND...HAIL 80MPH 1.75IN

ere!

Mike Umscheid

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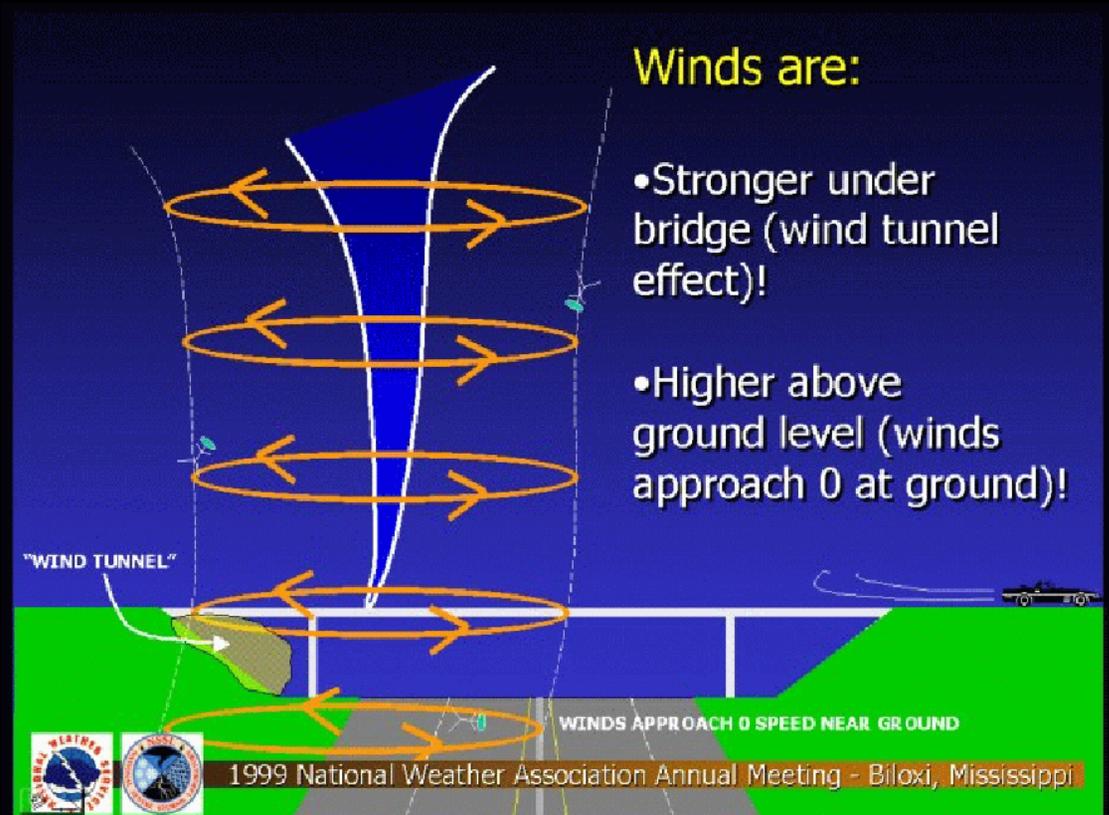
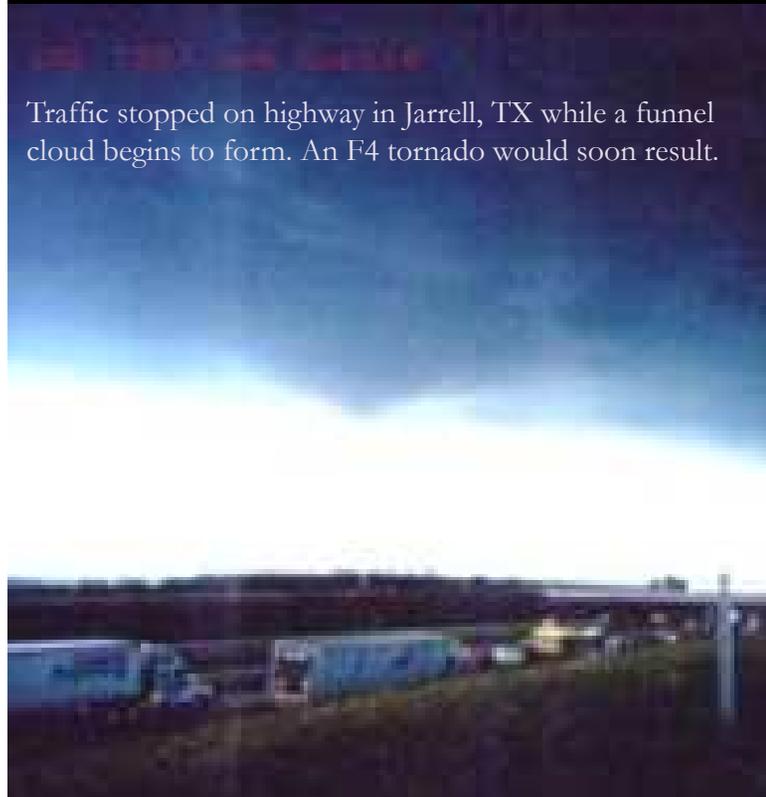
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Don't get tossed!



EF2 Tornado in NW Alabama on May 9, 2008

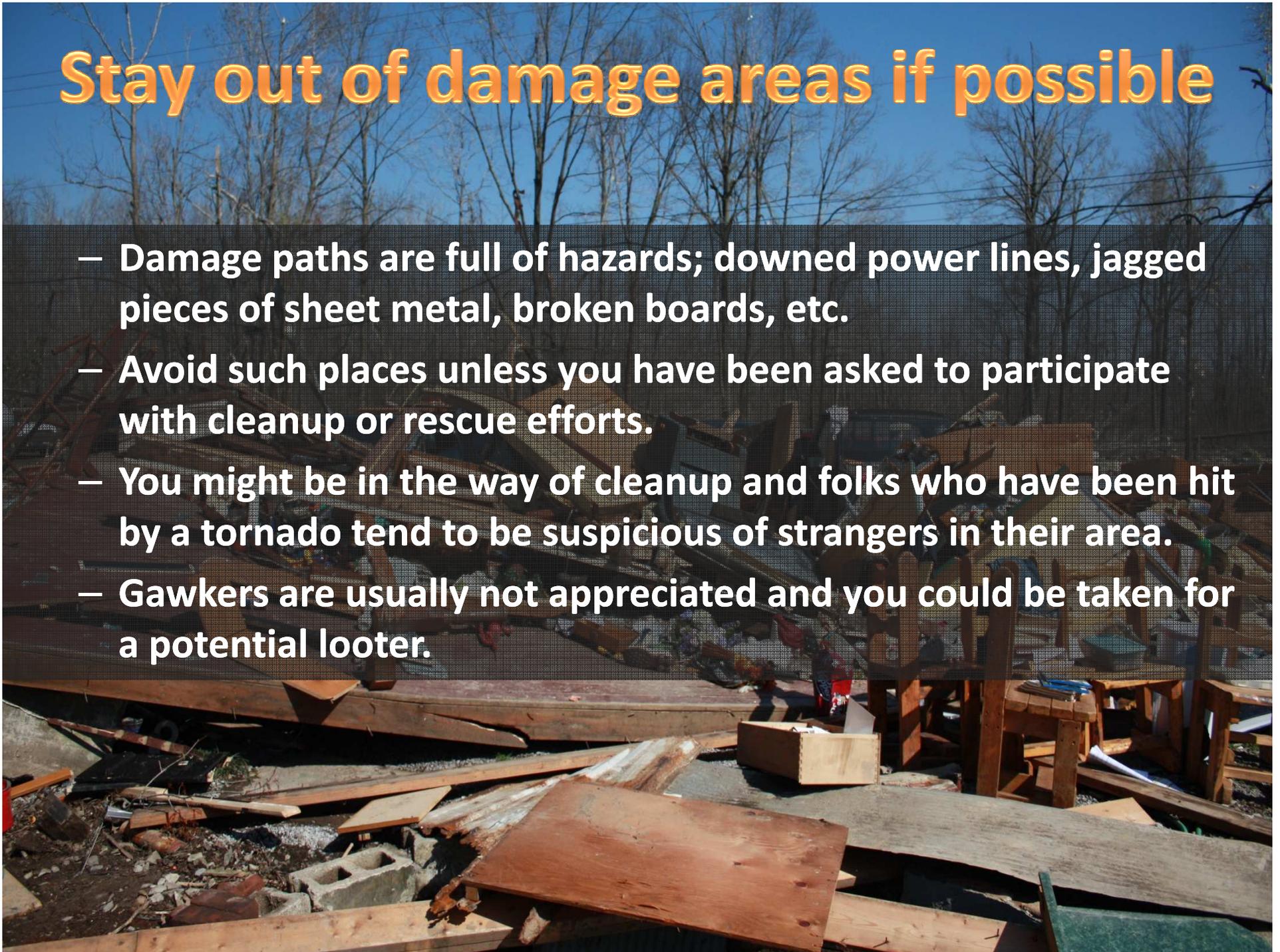
Why overpasses are NOT safe place during a tornado



- ✓ **All tornadoes have debris; you could be maimed or killed by flying debris, especially in more urban areas.**
- ✓ **Tornadic winds are stronger higher up**
- ✓ **Winds become channeled underneath the bridge, making them stronger**
- ✓ **Most overpasses do not have beams for handholds or ledges nor do they have "crawl spaces".**
- ✓ **The highway can become blocked, which poses a serious threat to those fleeing an oncoming tornado**
- ✓ **Even just parking underneath an overpass is a bad idea!**

Stay out of damage areas if possible

- Damage paths are full of hazards; downed power lines, jagged pieces of sheet metal, broken boards, etc.
- Avoid such places unless you have been asked to participate with cleanup or rescue efforts.
- You might be in the way of cleanup and folks who have been hit by a tornado tend to be suspicious of strangers in their area.
- Gawkers are usually not appreciated and you could be taken for a potential looter.



Stay out of damage areas if possible

“The first few hours, we were doing search and rescue,” said Newton County Sheriff Ken Copeland in an interview. “We were extremely hampered by sightseers, people who wanted to come out and see the damage. We couldn't get emergency vehicles through: Ambulances, police cars, fire trucks, they all had a terrible time getting cars out of the road so they could rescue people.”

