

## Devastating tornado facts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tornadoes concentrate vicious winds, up to 300 mph, focusing their twisting forces on small areas where they can destroy everything in their path.

That power was evident Sunday when a series of storms struck from Missouri to Maryland, claiming a half-dozen lives and ruining homes and businesses.

As many as 1,000 tornadoes occur each year in the United States, yet each is uniquely dangerous and frightening when it arrives, moving quickly and often accompanied by rain, hail, thunder and lightning.

Unlike hurricanes, usually reported days before they threaten, the storms that spawn tornadoes can erupt rapidly.

Only a few decades ago, tornado warnings did not go out until a twister was on the ground, but thanks to radar and satellites, the conditions that create these storms now can be better monitored. Last year the National Weather Service delivered warnings, on average, 11.5 minutes before a tornado struck.

In the storm that claimed three lives in Maryland, for example, warning of a severe storm with possible tornado was issued at 6:45 p.m. It was upgraded to a tornado warning

at 7:02 p.m. Approximately eight minutes later the tornado hit La Plata and 39 minutes later it reached Calvert County.

The Maryland tornado was listed at F5 on the Fujita scale for twisters, with winds of more than 260 mph, making it the strongest tornado on record in the state. It was at first rated an F4 but was upgraded after meteorologists surveyed damage on the ground, according to Susan Weaver of the National Weather Service. The scale goes from F0 to F5.

No state is exempt from tornadoes; Missouri and Illinois each average 26 twisters annually. In a normal year, Kentucky faces nine tornadoes, and there are four in Maryland.

Little seemed normal to those experiencing the storms, which formed along a massive front moving from west to east across the country, mixing warm and cool, wet and dry air and stirring up a witches' brew of winds.

"They appear to have been fairly prolific producers of tornadoes," said Harold Brooks, a research meteorologist at the government's National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Oklahoma.

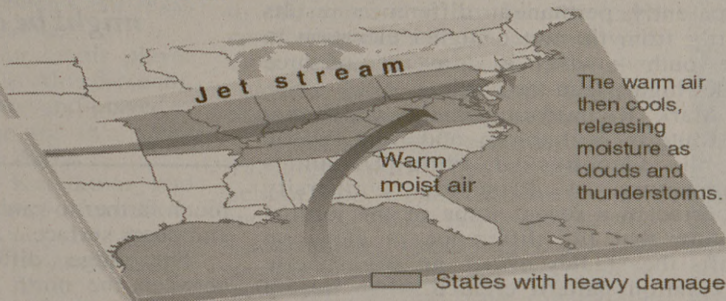
See **Tornado** on page 8A

### Spring storm leaves widespread damage

Lines of tornado bearing thunderstorms swept across the Midwest and East on Sunday, causing at least six deaths. The storms were created by pockets of warm air rising through cooler air.

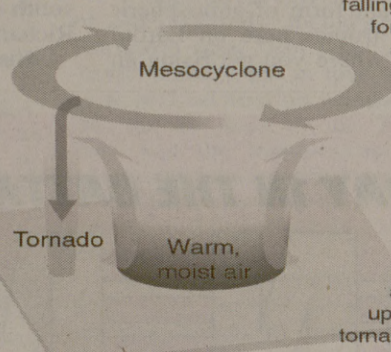
On Sunday, the jet stream pushed cold air over warm humid air.

The more buoyant warm air causes instability when it rises through cool air.



### How a tornado forms

In a tornado producing storm, wind direction changes with altitude while speeds increase, causing the entire system to rotate in a mesocyclone.



SOURCES: Associated Press; AccuWeather; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Dan DeLorenzo, Hassan Hodges/AP

## Prescription drugs easier to buy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ask a doctor for a prescription drug you saw advertised on TV, and 69 percent of the time you will go home with it.

That is what the Food and Drug Administration discovered in a survey that illustrates how big a role advertising plays in the doctor's office.

Is that necessarily bad? Critics bemoan the findings, while proponents say drug ads help more sick people find treatment — but the FDA still is struggling to uncover the true public health impact of the nation's barrage of drug commercials.

"The question is: Are people getting drugs that actually aren't appropriate?" says FDA drug chief Dr. Janet Woodcock.

She does not yet know. But the FDA now is studying why doctors prescribe the way they do, a first step toward answering that question. And the agency is consider-

ing if some of the rules that govern how powerful medications are advertised need changing to ensure consumers better understand a drug's pros and cons.

It is a complex issue. Doctors have to decide more than yes or no when a patient demands a drug by name. Does the patient expect a miracle because the ad over-promised a pill's benefits? Is there an alternative that works better, more safely or is cheaper? Cheaper drugs typically do not rate a commercial, while the hottest-selling newer drugs — like arthritis treatments Vioxx and Celebrex or heartburn medicine Prilosec — are among the most heavily advertised.

Then there is the trickier question of who an ad targets. The National Medical Association, which represents black doctors, says direct-to-consumer drug ads can prod people reluctant to visit a doctor to do

so — especially black Americans, who are less likely to get appropriate care for a host of diseases.

But today's ads are not living up to that potential, the NMA said this month as it issued what is for a health group a startling call for more drug ads — in media outlets that target minorities and with more culturally diverse commercials.

How important is advertising to a patient's perception of disease? Consider the middle-aged black woman who looked shocked when NMA member Dr. Sharon Allison-Ottey ordered a test for bone-thinning osteoporosis. "I can't get that — white women get that," the patient said, citing TV commercials and ads in Allison-Ottey's own Baltimore waiting room that featured only white women swallowing pills for the ailment.

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Wed., May 1, Thurs., May 2, and Thurs., May 31  
9:00 am - 11:00 a.m.

Summer I, II and Fall  
Mon., June 3  
9:00 am - 11:00 a.m.

Summer II and Fall  
Tues., July 9  
9:00 am - 11:00 a.m.

Fall only  
Mon., September 2  
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1. Make sure you have the correct prerequisite (English 104 or equivalent).
2. Come to **Blocker 224** during the force dates and times listed above.
3. Bring a letter on departmental stationary from your academic advisor stating that you are graduating in the semester for which you are registering.

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- You must come in during these dates.
- Although forcing will occur on the first morning of each Summer and Fall session, no forces will be given for a distance course beginning that day.
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May 3 and 8 from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm  
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**Other Food Service locations open late Thursday, May 2 and Sunday, May 5 through Tuesday, May 7, 2002.**

- Breakfast Tacos Study Festival**  
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Commons and Sbsa Dining Centers  
Late night 10:00 pm - 2:00 am
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- Commons C-Store and Underground C-Store**  
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- Commons and Sbsa Dining Centers**  
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- Duncan Dining Center**  
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to the Corps of Cadets for study  
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- Poor Yorick's Coffee House**  
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- Rumours**  
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