

## Tornadoes

A tornado is a fierce rotating storm that can cause tremendous destruction. Most of the tornadoes on Earth happen in the United States, but they have been recorded on all continents except Antarctica.

Tornadoes usually form in supercell thunderstorms, where winds travelling at different speeds cause a horizontal rotating tube of air called a vortex. The vortex is pushed upwards by an updraft of warm air, creating a vertical cylinder of rotating air. The mesocyclone sucks up more warm air, while the cold wind, rain and hail push down. This causes the wind to form a funnel shape, spinning faster and faster. Eventually, the funnel can touch down on the ground, becoming a tornado.

Many tornadoes are small and only last a few minutes, but larger tornadoes can be devastating, with wind speeds of up to 300 miles an hour. The strong updraft of a tornado can suck large objects up into the air, however it is often the flying debris thrown around by the violent winds that causes much of the damage and loss of life.

Tornadoes are both fascinating and terrifying, an unpredictable and powerful natural disaster.