

7 tornadoes confirmed as Michigan storms down trees and power lines; 5 people killed

August 25 2023, by COREY WILLIAMS and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER



Emergency crews assess damage after a strong storm passed in Kent County, Michigan on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. A strong storm powered by winds up to 75 mph has downed trees and power lines across Michigan, torn roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: Joel Bissell/Kalamazoo Gazette via AP

At least seven tornadoes touched down in Michigan as part of severe storms powered by strong winds that killed five people, while downing trees, tearing roofs off buildings and leaving hundreds of thousands of customers without power, officials said.

The National Weather Service on Friday said an EF-2 tornado with a maximum wind speed of 125 mph (201 kilometers per hour) struck Lansing, the state capital, killing one person Thursday night and injuring three others.

Lansing Police Department spokesperson Jordan Gulkis said an 84-year-old woman died after a tree fell on a home. Firefighters extricated the woman from the home, but she was pronounced dead at a hospital.

The weather service also confirmed that an EF-1 tornado with winds of 90 mph (145 kph) crossed from Ingham County into the western edge of adjacent Livingston County on Thursday night.

Four other EF-1 tornadoes were reported in Belleville and Gibraltar in Wayne County, and in South Rockwood and near Newport in Monroe County.

A weaker EF-0 tornado with peak winds of 80 mph (128 kph) was on the ground for less than two miles in Wayne County's Canton Township, west of Detroit, the weather service said. That tornado caused a tree to fall into a house, said meteorologist Sara Schultz.

The weather service office in Grand Rapids, in western Michigan, said officials would be in the field Friday conducting damage surveys on a suspected tornado in Kent County.



A tree sits damaged after severe weather in Kent County, Michigan on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. A strong storm powered by winds up to 75 mph has downed trees and power lines across Michigan, torn roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: Joel Bissell/Kalamazoo Gazette via AP

The storms featured lightning displays erupting across the night sky and dumped multiple inches of rain on communities across the lower portion of the state.

In western Michigan, the Kent County sheriff's office said a 21-year-old woman and two girls, ages 1 and 3, died Thursday night after two vehicles collided head-on as it was raining.

"There was two vehicles traveling toward each other. [One hydroplaned on water](#) and it was occupied by four people," Sgt. Eric Brunner told WZZM-TV.

The sheriff's office said a 22-year-old Gowen man who was driving the car carrying the woman and two girls was seriously injured in the crash, which occurred when his car struck an SUV. That vehicle's driver suffered minor injuries.

In Ingham County, where Lansing is located, the sheriff's office said Friday that one person was confirmed dead and several people severely injured as more than 25 vehicles were severely damaged along Interstate 96.



Emergency crews clear damage after a strong storm passed in Kent County, Michigan on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. A strong storm powered by winds up to 75 mph has downed trees and power lines across Michigan, torn roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: Joel Bissell/Kalamazoo Gazette via AP

It was not immediately clear early Friday afternoon if the storm or a crash was responsible for the wrecks on the freeway.

In the north Detroit suburb of Southfield, Muqitu Berry said he was in his ranch home about 9:30 p.m. Thursday when a large part of the trunk of a neighbor's tree came crashing down, sounding "like a train coming through."

The tree ended up across the front of Berry's driveway and yard and took down power lines, dropping them onto his driveway and at least one vehicle, leaving Berry and his neighbors without power.

"I can't get out of my driveway. I can't go anywhere," Berry said Friday morning. "We're out of power, and it's very frustrating."

Wayne County Executive Warren Evans declared a state of emergency Friday in Michigan's largest county, which includes Detroit, due to power outages, flooding, fallen trees and power lines and storm debris.



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The county also warned residents to avoid any contact with several rivers after flooding caused municipalities to discharge partially or fully untreated wastewater into various waterways.

In Macomb County, northeast of Detroit, several thousand basements in Eastpointe and St. Clair Shores were spared flooding when stormwater and wastewater were discharged to Lake St. Clair through an emergency bypass system, Public Works Commissioner Candice Miller said. The

bypass has been used only three times since 2017 but twice this week.

"Apparently, these storms have become our new normal," Miller said.

"This has been like a tropical storm, and both government and residents will need to make appropriate preparations whenever possible."

Canton Township, a community of some 100,000 people, was hit earlier this week by flooding in its downtown business district.



Traffic is redirected from the I-94 and I-275 interchange after overnight flooding left vehicles stranded near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, in Detroit. Credit: Kimberly P. Mitchell/Detroit Free Press via AP

"Some of our parks are destroyed," township supervisor Anne Marie Graham-Hudak said, adding that the township received calls from 200 residents regarding flooding in their basements.

More than 390,000 customers in Michigan and over 120,000 in Ohio were without power as of about 7:15 p.m. Friday, according to the [Poweroutage.us website](http://Poweroutage.us).

Thursday night's storms followed a round of heavy rain Wednesday that left areas in southeast Michigan with over 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) of rain by Thursday morning, resulting in street flooding in the Detroit area, including tunnels leading to Detroit Metropolitan Airport in the suburb of Romulus, officials said.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Friday declared a state of emergency for Wayne and Monroe counties, which makes available state resources to help with response and recovery efforts related to storm damage.



A man stands in front of his car stranded at the exit of the New Towne Center strip mall at Sheldon and Ford Roads in Canton, Mich., after a thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area early Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. He was able to get it started and drove away. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



Jerald Joubran, 30, of Hollywood tries to find his family after his flight landed at McNamara Terminal and he trekked up the road at Detroit Metropolitan Airport where passengers and would-be travelers were stranded after overnight flooding in the area on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. (Kimberly P. Mitchell/Detroit Free Press via AP)/Detroit Free Press via AP)



A plane flies over flooding on I-94 eastbound service drive at Vinning Road on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, Romulus, Mich. Officials say parts of southeast Michigan got over 5 inches of rain by Thursday morning resulting in street flooding in the Detroit area, including tunnels leading to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Credit: Clarence Tabb Jr./Detroit News via AP



Damage to a structure is left after a strong storm passed in Kent County, Michigan on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. A strong storm powered by winds up to 75 mph has downed trees and power lines across Michigan, torn roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: Joel Bissell/Kalamazoo Gazette via AP



Flooding around the Detroit Metropolitan Airport left passengers and would-be travelers stranded after a deluge of rain overnight on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Many passengers walked to Eureka road from McNamara Terminal after landing in hopes of finding their family. Credit: Kimberly P. Mitchell/Detroit Free Press via AP



Floodwaters blocks Wayne Road under I-94, Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, in Detroit. Officials say parts of southeast Michigan got over 5 inches of rain by Thursday morning resulting in street flooding in the Detroit area, including tunnels leading to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Credit: David Guralnick/Detroit News via AP



A "water over road" sign stands near floodwaters at Sheldon and Ford Roads in Canton, Mich., after a thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area early Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



A man removes downed trees after a strong storm passed in Kent County, Michigan on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. A strong storm powered by winds up to 75 mph has downed trees and power lines across Michigan, torn roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: Joel Bissell/Kalamazoo Gazette via AP



A tow truck drives through floodwaters to clear cars stuck on Canton Center Road near Ford Road in Canton, Mich., after a thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area early Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



People help push a car out of floodwaters after a woman got stuck in the middle of Canton Center Road in Canton, Mich., after a thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area early Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



A tow truck driver from K.M.C. Towing checks on a woman stuck in her car in floodwaters on Canton Center Road in Canton, Mich., after a thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area early Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



Traffic is redirected from I-275 after overnight flooding left vehicles stranded near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus, Mich., Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sancya



Aidan Ross, 17 of Canton, joins neighborhood friends in their kayaking going up and down Canton Center Road in Canton, Mich. looking to help stranded motorists in need of help after a big thunderstorm dumped several inches of rain in the area in the early morning hours of Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press via AP



Traffic is redirected from I-275 after overnight flooding left vehicles stranded near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus, Mich., Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sancya



Mitzi Hale and her three sons look out a window at backed-up traffic due to the closure of Detroit Metropolitan Airport's McNamara Terminal on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, in Romulus, Mich. A flight originating from McNamara that was scheduled to take Hale and her boys to Florida for a vacation was delayed. Parts of Michigan received more than 5 inches of rain, which flooded tunnels leading to Detroit's main airport. Credit: AP Photo/Mike Householder



Cars sit stranded in floodwaters on Sheldon Road south of Ford road in Canton, Mich., Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Officials say parts of southeast Michigan got over 5 inches of rain by Thursday morning resulting in street flooding in the Detroit area, including tunnels leading to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Credit: David Guralnick/Detroit News via AP



Traffic is redirected from I-275 after overnight flooding left vehicles stranded near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus, Mich., Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Paul Sancya



A tree is uprooted outside a home on Friday, Aug. 25, 2023, in Canton Township, Mich. A strong storm powered by winds of up to 75 mph (121 kph) in Michigan downed trees, tore roofs off buildings and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. Credit: AP Photo/Mike Householder



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The storms pushed east across Lake Erie and into northeast Ohio, uprooting trees and leaving thousands of homes and businesses without power.

A tornado also tore through part of Cleveland late Thursday night. It's path was about 150 yards (137 meters) wide and nearly a mile long.

No injuries were reported, but several buildings were severely damaged, including the 143-year-old New Life at Calvary Church that lost its roof. Church leaders asked members to stay away from the building.

"2 Timothy 4:17 says, the Lord stood with me and gave me strength," Pastor Kellie Sullivan said in a press release. "Our church has faced major loss and we praise God that no one was hurt. Please pray for our church as we start to rebuild."

Parts of the western United States have been deluged in recent weeks with rain from Tropical Storm Hilary, and much of the central U.S. was beaten down by [deadly sweltering heat](#). In Hawaii and Washington, emergency crews battled catastrophic wildfires.

Scientists say that without extensive study they cannot directly link a single weather event to climate change, but that climate change is responsible for more intense and more frequent extreme events such as storms, droughts, floods and wildfires. Climate change is largely caused by human activities that emit carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, according to the vast majority of peer-reviewed studies, science organizations and climate scientists.

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