

Weather Wise

Tornadoes

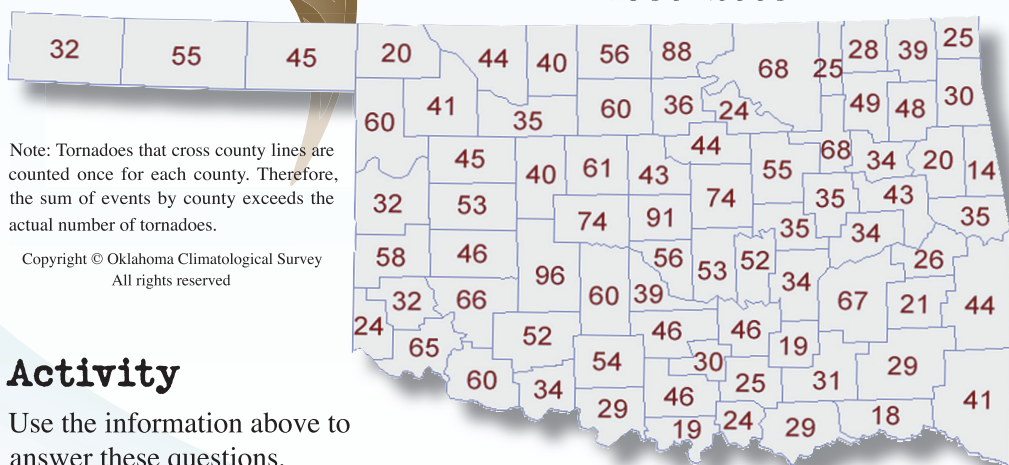
Oklahoma is in the middle of the most active tornado region of the United States. Tornadoes can occur at any time of the day and during every month of the year. In Oklahoma, our peak time for severe weather is from April to June.

It is important to have a severe weather safety plan. First, know the name of your county. The National Weather Service issues watches and warnings using county names to indicate where storms are expected or are currently located. Follow these three steps to find safe shelter.

Get In—Find a sturdy building. **Get Down**—Move to the center part of the building on the lowest level away from windows.

Cover Up—Protect yourself with blankets or a mattress. Put on your shoes and wear either a bike or football helmet.

Number of tornadoes by County 1950–2005



Note: Tornadoes that cross county lines are counted once for each county. Therefore, the sum of events by county exceeds the actual number of tornadoes.

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Activity

Use the information above to answer these questions.

1. Shade in red each county that reported 56 or more tornadoes during the 56-year period. These counties experienced, on average, at least one tornado per year. Using a map of Oklahoma, list these counties.
2. Based on the shaded areas in Question 1, where have the most tornadoes been observed? The Panhandle, Western Oklahoma, Central Oklahoma, or Eastern Oklahoma?
3. What factors might influence the number of tornado reports? (Teachers Note: Consider factors such as population and county size.)

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