

Late Summer Severe Weather

Typically late summer is a time for decreased thunderstorm activity and an even lower probability of severe weather. However, the active spring and early summer severe weather season continued to bombard northeast Montana in August and September. A total of 46 severe weather reports were received by cooperative observers, spotters and the general public. The worst day, was an outbreak that consisted of 37 of the total reports; the date was August 10th.

Two tornadoes were reported that evening. The first one touched down southeast of Malta hitting an isolated farm with minor damage. The second one touched down just south of Opheim and was visible from highway 24. It caused minor damage to a farm truck returning from the field. Both events were surveyed by National Weather Service personnel, who concluded the damage to be in the new Enhanced Fujita scale of EF-1. This rating corresponds to winds in the 86 to 110 mph range.

Straight line winds also wreaked havoc that evening, with gusts raging from 60 to 75 mph. Damage was mostly confined to downed tree branches and rocks hitting homes. Roosevelt County received the brunt of the wind that night, with nine events being reported. Brockton was hardest hit with damage to barn roofs and grain bins. A spotter 16 miles north of Brockton recorded a wind gust to 75 miles an hour and one report received by the office, involved an air conditioner that was sucked out a window.

Fortunately only two reports of hail came into the National Weather Service office that night and they both occurred in northern Valley County. Unfortunately, some of the same farms that were hit hard from early July hailstorms were hit again.

Scattered reports of severe weather continued to be reported through September 20th. Of those, hail fell across Valley, McCone and Roosevelt Counties on September 4th, while Dawson County received hail to the size of quarters near Lindsay on the 20th. No other severe reports have been documented since the 20th of September, which is good news since Northeast Montanans dealt with an intensive 2007 severe weather season that won't be easily forgotten.