

NCAR

Information Release

1981-18

June 26, 1981
For Immediate Release

DENVER TORNADO OUTBREAK ANALYSIS SHOWS THREE FUNNELS HIT AREA

BOULDER--An aerial analysis of the damage from the tornado outbreak that ripped through parts of Denver, Wednesday, June 3, proved that three separate funnel clouds, classified from 0 to 2 on the Fujita tornado scale, touched down in the greater metropolitan area.

The first tornado touched down at 2:23 p.m. at 6th and Sheridan in Lakewood; the second slammed into Thornton at 88th and Washington at 2:43 p.m.; and the third hit Fort Lupton, northeast of Denver, at 3:31 p.m.

The aerial survey was conducted for the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, by Dr. Roger Wakimoto, the University of Chicago, who has done similar surveys for many of the more devastating tornadoes in the United States. Wakimoto used a tornado damage scale with a range of 0 to 5 that has been developed by Dr. Theodore Fujita, professor of meteorology at the university's Department of Geophysical Sciences.

As the map indicates, the Fujita tornado damage scale is expressed in terms of wind speeds: 0 on the scale equals winds of 40 to 72 miles per hour; 1 equals winds of 73 to 112 miles per hour; and 2 equals wind velocities of 113 to 157 miles per hour. The tornado strengths were estimated from the types of damage viewed in the aerial survey.

The recent tornado outbreak was the largest ever recorded in the Denver metropolitan area in the 75 to 80 years that the National Weather Service has been keeping records. According to meteorologists it is likely that all three tornadoes and many of the observed funnel clouds that did not touch the ground were produced by one large supercell thunderstorm moving from the southwest to the northeast.

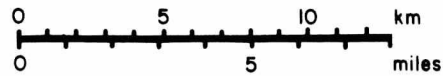
#

Joan Vandiver Frisch
Information Officer
National Center for Atmospheric Research
Post Office Box 3000
Boulder, CO 80307

(303) 494-5151, Extension 261

DENVER TORNADOES

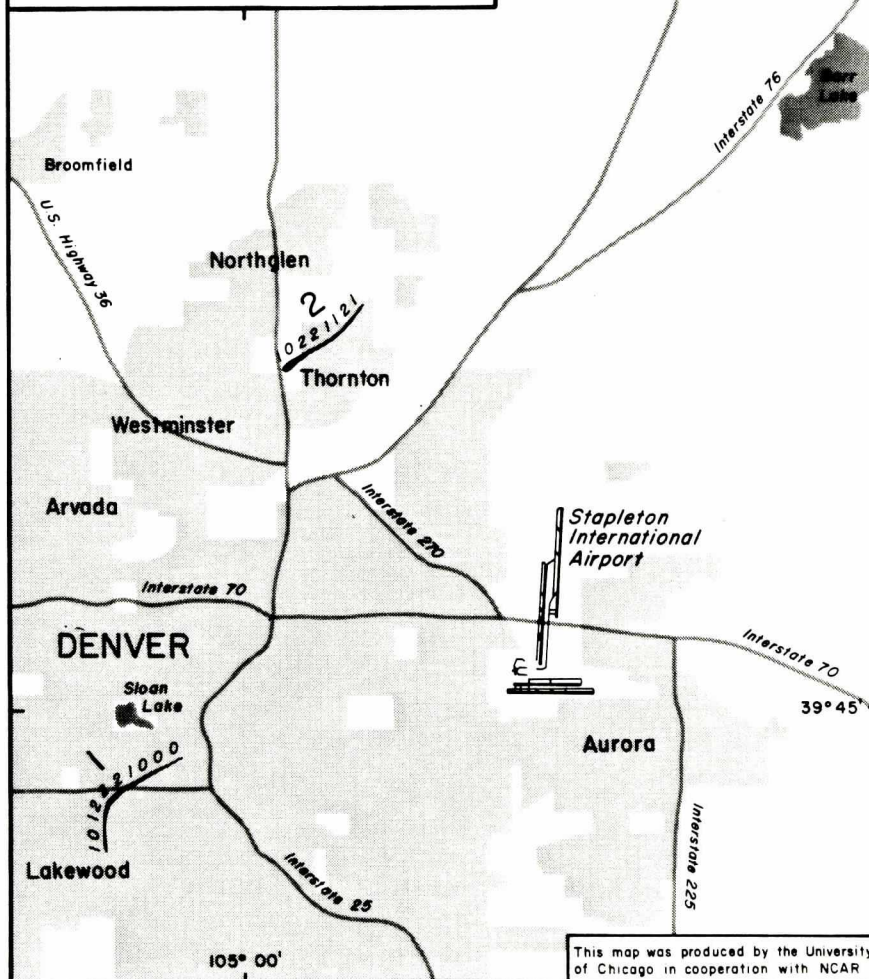
JUNE 3, 1981



No.	Name	Length	F, P, P
1.	Lakewood Tornado	3.0mi	2, 1, 1
2.	Thornton Tornado	2.3	2, 1, 2
3.	Ft. Lupton Tornado	0.9	1, 0, 1

0 1 2 2 10 1 ← Fujita F-Scale
TORNADO

F0 F1 F2
40-72 mph 73-112 mph 113-157 mph



This map was produced by the University of Chicago in cooperation with NCAR