



News TimeOut LifeStyle Local News Market Place

Hartford tornado struck out of nowhere

Residents, workers reacted to threat

By ZAK MAZUR - GM Today Staff

June 22, 2006

HARTFORD - For a lot of people in Hartford on Sunday, the tornado alarm sounded a little too late. But that was because the tornado seemed to come out of nowhere, like a Doppler radar-resistant stealth bomber attack.

"I was very much caught off guard," said Terry Jensen, forest manager for the Pike Lake Unit and Kettle Moraine State forest. "There were no (tornado) watches issued and we were all talking about what a nice light rain we were having. All of a sudden it started pouring."

Other people confirmed the strange nature of the storm.

"It had been raining off and on and we didn't see anything in the sky," said Karen Palmer, a clerical assistant for the Pike Lake Unit who was just driving into town when the tornado alarm began. "Usually the sky is dark and there is a tornado watch."

"The radio station gave a warning, and then it started down-pouring just as I was passing Hartford," said Madeiline Hoover, a maintenance worker at Pike Lake and resident of Rubicon. "I looked and saw clouds starting to swirl."

"It was kind of a light rain most of the day," said Kent Hadley, a volunteer camp host at Pike Lake. "I never heard a siren. Then, it started to rain really hard, but there was no wind. All of a sudden rangers came with their lights flashing and we all went to the bathroom for safety."



Amber King

Jessa Weiss, right, 4, of Hartford pulls her 10-month-old cousin Kyana Aguilera in a wagon in their grandparents front yard along Jefferson Avenue in Hartford on Tuesday.



Amber King

James Morin, 13, of Hartford carries a bin full of debris from his neighbor's yard along Cedar Street in Hartford on Tuesday. Morin's brother was at home when the tornado struck the city's south side. The Morins' home needs a new roof, gutters and siding. The roof alone will cost \$17,000. Trees were also downed in their yard.

[>> View photo gallery](#)

advertisement

Jensen said there are strict contingency plans in the event of serious storm or tornado warnings.

Related stories:

Beware of contractors with tornado scams

Red Cross: 'We won't leave here until we feel we've met their needs'

\$4 million property loss estimated in Hartford

Clean-up effort continues in Hartford

Storm-tossed Lincoln School flooded with calls of assistance

Experts questioned issuing tornado warning due to unusual weather

'Community care' emanates in Hartford

Tornado response: Humans first, structures next

Tornado tears through Hartford homes; a school damaged; one injured



"If a warning is issued we'll go through the camp with a loud speaker and go person to person to let them know where they can go for shelter."

"Oh yeah, it sure came as a surprise," said Dale Andrews, director of the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford. "I've never been this close to a tornado before."

Andrews said there were about 30 people in the museum when the sirens went off. He was not worried about his safety.

"All the people stayed inside," he said. "This is a pretty substantial building, I don't think anything is going to blow it away."

But classic car owners who show their cars at the museum were concerned.

"There were some car owners who called just to see if everything was okay," said Andrews.

Andy Diorio was leaving Kmart in Hartford and just entered his car when he spotted the tornado.

"I never saw one that close," he said. "I wasn't scared because I could see it, and I just drove away from it."

Tornado assistance

The city of Hartford has established a tornado response volunteer message center.

Call 262-670-4665 to offer volunteer help or to request assistance.

This story appeared in the West Bend Daily News on June 21, 2006