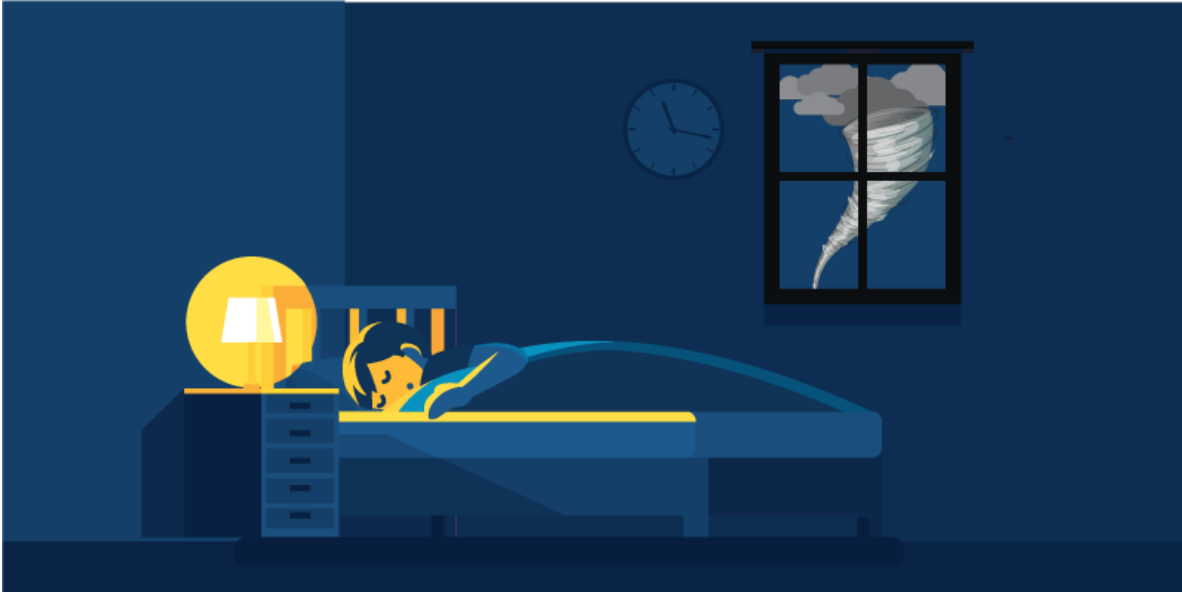


Tornado Alley In The Ozarks Means Bedtime Storms

Jun 5, 2019



It's the middle of the night. The sirens blare. You grab your phone, emergency kit, and round up your household to head to your storm shelter. Finally, your power goes out. Have you ever wondered why it seems like we're ALWAYS taking cover after bedtime? We asked the same question, so we talked with KY3's [Abby Dyer](#) to find out why.

In the Ozarks, our proximity to tornado alley plays a big role in why severe storms and tornadoes often happen in the evening and overnight hours.

Here comes your science lesson.

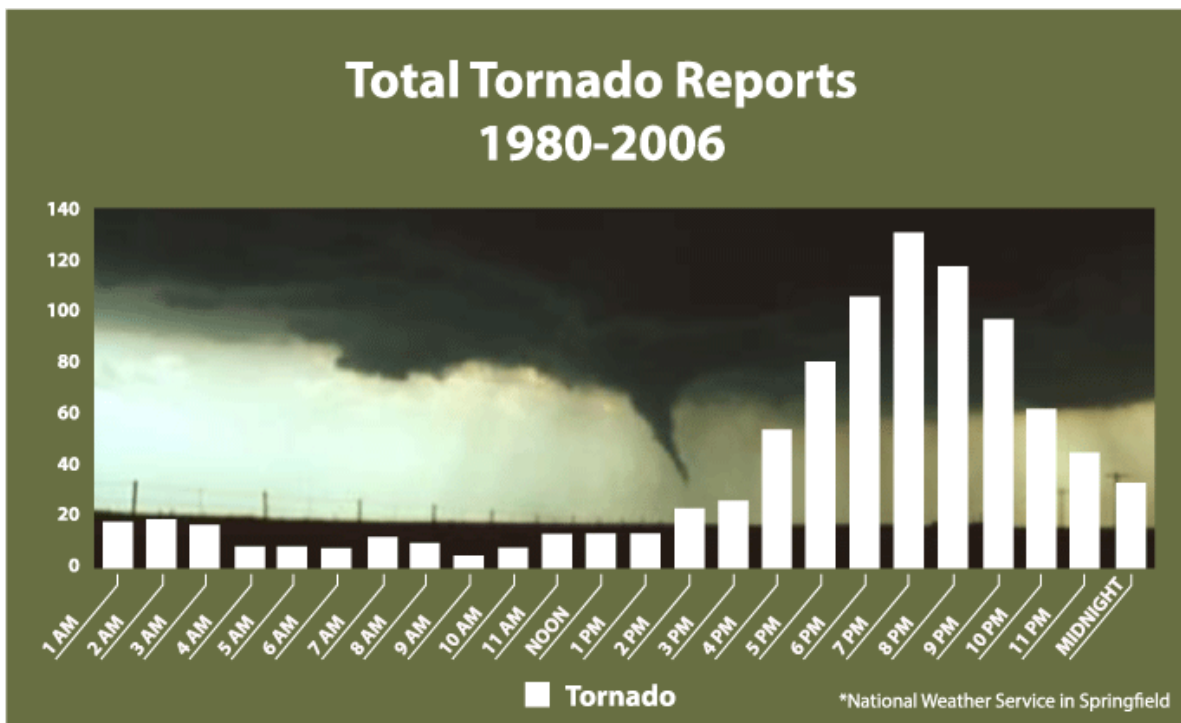
Abby told us that, on days that are conducive for tornado development, there is usually some sort of capping inversion in place. A "cap" is a layer of warm air in the upper atmosphere that

prevents storm development. For a storm to develop, it must overcome this inversion through sufficient surface heating. When surface heating is maximized in the late afternoon, this is the best chance to break any inversion that exists in the morning and early afternoon hours. As soon as the “cap” is broken and the conditions in the atmosphere are right, storms and tornadoes can develop.

In many cases, this happens first in Oklahoma, Texas or Kansas, and the storms chug along a boundary east into the Ozarks. A storm that developed in the afternoon in one of those states doesn't arrive at our doorstep until evening and lasts through the night.

This phenomenon doesn't happen with every storm we get in the Ozarks. Severe storms and tornadoes can happen any day of the year, at any time of day. However, the unique geographic location of the Ozarks, along with the ingredients needed for severe storm development, storms here are most common late in the day.

Did you know? The frequency of tornadoes in the Ozarks, according to the Springfield National Weather Service, is much higher from 5-11 p.m.



Power restoration is exponentially more challenging in the dark.

Thanks to Mother Nature and our unique position in the Ozarks, crews do a lot of work after hours because of these conveniently timed storms. A job that takes one hour to complete during the day may take two or three times as long (plus the time it takes for the linemen to get out of their beds and to the office) in the dark.

When it's dark, the linemen are working with flashlights and spotlights. It is very hard to see the lines to figure out what is down and what needs to be repaired. When it's afterhours and after many people have gone to bed, crews also face a challenge accessing areas that need attention. Gates are locked or crews need cars moved, and residents or business owners are asleep or staying elsewhere.

Despite the challenges, crews work until the job is finished. When there is dangerous weather, crews may still be out working. They work through the rain and everything that comes with it. To stay

safe, they may take a break in their truck if they feel the lightning is getting too close or if a torrential downpour is threatening their safety. Once the danger has passed, they are back at it even if it is still storming.