Toddler among 6 dead as tornadoes tear across Tennessee

The deaths were reported in Nashville and Clarksville, where at least one tornado was confirmed. Multiple others were believed to have hit across the state, officials said.

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A toddler was among six people killed when tornadoes struck Nashville and the Tennessee town of Clarksville early Saturday evening, officials said. Dozens more were injured.

Nashville police said in a statement Sunday that 2-year-old Anthony Elmer Mendez was killed alongside his mom, Floridema Gabriel Perez, 31, in a northern community of Nashville along Nesbitt Lane. Joseph Dalton, 37, was also killed, the statement said.

Perez's 7-year-old son and Dalton's 10-year-old son were "transported to Vanderbilt Pediatrics with non-life threatening injuries," police said.

The dead in Clarksville include two adults and one child, according to an earlier statement from Michelle Newell, spokesperson for Montgomery County, where the town is located.

Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts said on Sunday that a total of 62 people have been hospitalized in the aftermath of the tornadoes.

Montgomery County Emergency Services Chief Jimmie Edwards said Sunday morning that seven patients were transferred to Vanderbilt in what

he described as “critical” condition.

Edwards was asked by reporter whether the county was checking on tornado sirens following reports that some did not alert residents to the incoming threat until after it passed. He told the reporter checks are something that “regularly happens” and could not speak to a specific siren issue from Saturday night.

The Nashville Office of Emergency Management reported “severe damage” in the area around Nesbitt Lane and asked residents to avoid it as well as downed power lines.

Thirteen people were injured in a church collapse roughly 9 miles north of downtown Nashville and were stabilized after being taken to hospitals, the office said.

The office said that around 4 p.m., National Weather Service radar had suggested a “large and extremely dangerous tornado” was spinning about

30 miles west of Nashville and headed east at 40 mph.

“This was considered a particularly dangerous situation,” it said.

Nashville Mayor Freddie O’Connell declared a state of emergency late Saturday and urged people to stay away from areas with significant damage, including the community of Madison, the city's “hardest-hit” area, the statement said.

The declaration was preceded by one from Clarksville’s Mayor Pitts, who also enacted a 9 p.m. curfew Saturday and Sunday “for the health, safety, and welfare of the community,” he said in a separate statement.

Pitts urged the community to be patient, cautioning that it could take weeks before power was restored to some homes as officials dealt with the “multi-day” event.

More than 50,000 utility customers statewide were in the dark overnight, with outages concentrated in Middle Tennessee, according to poweroutage.us. By Sunday morning, more than 41,000 remained without power, based on the site’s data.

“This is a sad day for our community,” Montgomery County Mayor Wes Golden said in the statement. “We are praying for those who are injured, lost loved ones, and lost their homes. This community pulls together like no other and we will be here until the end.”

The numbers could change, officials said, as authorities continued to search for survivors into the night.

Multiple tornadoes were reported across Tennessee on Saturday.

Authorities in Weakley County, in the northeast of the state, reported

residents trapped and homes damaged following an apparent tornado there.

A tornado in Gibson County, northeast of Memphis, caused “significant damage” to homes and downed power lines and trees, county Sheriff Paul Thomas said.

In the town of Rutherford, resident Ethan Goad said the local fire station was destroyed and “everyone around me was freaking out.”

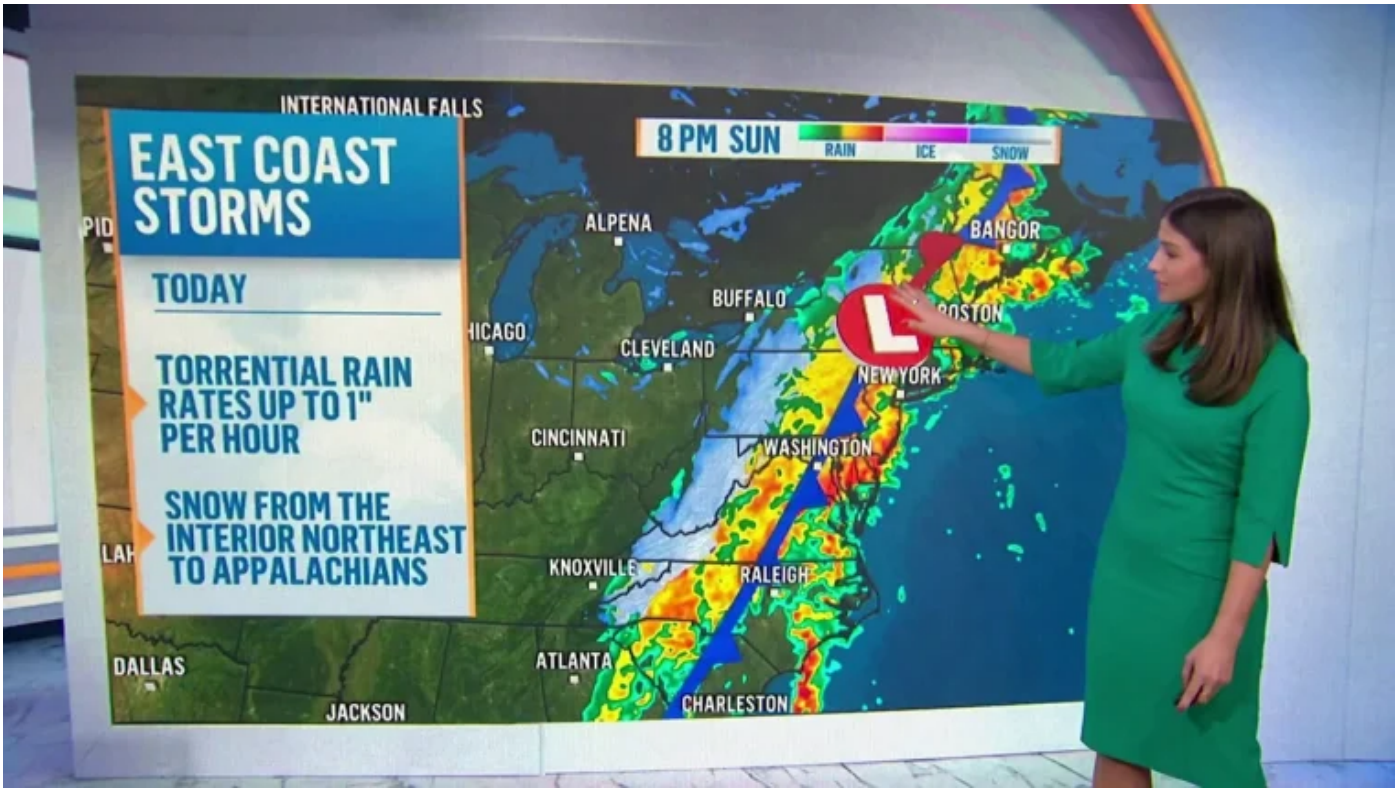
Homes damaged by a possible tornado in Clarksville, Tenn., on Saturday.Kizzy Rae & Kayla Ninchritz

Cindy Walls of the Gibson County Fire Department confirmed damage to the station in Rutherford and to other structures in the town.

"We have damage to homes, barns and other structures as well," she said.

Thomas said the reported tornado caused "significant damage" to structures.

Gov. Bill Lee said on the social media platform X that he and wife Maria "are praying for all Tennesseans who have been impacted by the tornadoes that swept through the state this evening."



The National Weather Service confirmed at least one tornado in Clarksville. Images from the city show structures reduced to twisted piles of wood and trees on the wet ground.

Other reported tornadoes were not officially confirmed by the weather service but were being considered as likely, a weather service forecaster in Nashville said.

The weather service normally deploys next-day observers to confirm a

tornado by measuring its track and documenting damage.

The tornadoes were the result of warm, wet Gulf Coast air colliding with cold air from the north and moving along a front that’s headed east, forecasters said.