

# NWS confirms EF-2 tornado hit Amherst County

**By:** WRIC Newsroom

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The National Weather Service completed a survey of damage that has impacted northwest Campbell County, the City of Lynchburg and southern Amherst Co and have confirmed that a tornado, with a 20.4-mile long path, touched down.

The tornado had maximum wind speeds of 130 mph.

The tornado touched down in northwest Campbell County and did EF1 damage to trees and roof damage to houses.

As they walked through their Hunt Club Estates neighborhood, residents describe the aftermath of Sunday night's storm as a 'war zone.'

David Childress and his wife saw the storm coming Sunday night from their home off Patridge Place. David rushed to pick up his son from a youth group gathering at Elon Baptist Church.

When he returned to the neighborhood 10 minutes later, his house was gone.



**Storm damage in Elon (Amherst County).**

His wife and other son are both OK, but the house his family built was leveled.

On Monday, the family sorted through the debris. They had help from neighbors and friends, as well as students from his son's high school.

The **National Weather Service later confirmed that an EF2 tornado** touched down in the area, producing wind speeds as powerful as 130 mph.

Childress said they have found pictures, jewelry, clothes and other belongings, but nothing can replace the feeling that his family is alive.

"You think this won't happen to you," said Childress, who has lived in Elon for the past nine years. "They do happen, so be cautious and go out into your neighborhood and help people.



"There are a lot of people who are devastated especially in this Elon area. Our house isn't the only one that's totally destroyed."

The National Weather Service is still surveying the damage to determine whether or not a tornado touched down.

In Lynchburg, the tornado touched down and damaged a mobile home park. It widened to around 600 yards and did EF1 damage. It then crossed the James into Amherst County.

In Amherst County, dozens of homes were badly damaged, some completely, and many trees were snapped off and left with no branches.



Storm damage in Chesterfield County.

A motorhome was carried about 30 feet and tipped over.

The damage done was about 400 yards wide, the strong EF2 damage was about 100 yards wide.

The tornado reached low-end EF2 wind speeds of 115 mph.

### **Storm damage in Virginia and North Carolina Apr 16, 2018**



The remains of Waterlick Garage and Tire on Timberlake. According to General Manager Scott Davis, no one was there Sunday evening when the storm occurred. “Right now, we’re just waiting for the fire department to clear us to go inside and try and get our stuff out,” he said as he surveyed the damage Monday morning.

- Margaret Carmel



The home of Randy Johnson, in the Elon area of Amherst County, is shown Monday, April 16, 2018, after it was destroyed by a storm Sunday.

## National Weather Service confirms tornado with 130-mph winds hit Lynchburg area

- By SEAN GORMAN AND JOHN BOYER Richmond Times–Dispatch



Some of the worst storm damage was in the Elon area of Amherst County early Sunday evening, likely from one or more tornadoes. In addition to destroying buildings, the storm toppled an RV (at left) and sheared the tops from trees.

David Neighbors surveys storm damage on Monday, April 16, 2018, in Elon, Va., after a storm. (Jay Westcott/The News & Advance via AP)

**Update:** The National Weather Service said late Monday night that a tornado with estimated top wind speeds of 130 mph hit Lynchburg and the neighboring counties of Campbell and Amherst on Sunday evening.

The tornado cut a 20.4-mile path beginning about 7 p.m. It started near Timberlake in northwest Campbell County, moved into western Lynchburg, then crossed the James River into Amherst County.

The 130-mph winds put the tornado "at the high end of the EF2 scale," according to a statement from the weather service's Blacksburg office.

The weather service estimated that the tornado injured 12 people.

Communities near Lynchburg began to survey and clean up tornado damage Monday after a line of storms swept across the entire state Sunday and early Monday.

The worst damage was in the Timberlake area of Campbell County and the Elon area of Amherst County early Sunday evening, very likely from one or more tornadoes.

Amherst County Administrator Dean Rodgers said about 20 homes in that county were destroyed and multiple people were taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

John Fuqua, an Amherst resident, told the Lynchburg News & Advance that he was on the phone Sunday with his mother, who lives on High Peak Road, when the line went dead. Fuqua told the newspaper he later found out his mother went to his aunt's house next door and was safe but "scared and very shaken up."

Fuqua said that he grew up on High Peak Road and has seen storms before but not like Sunday night's.

"[The damage] was pretty devastating with the amount of big, mature trees uprooted like it was nothing. There's a telephone pole that's snapped like a toothpick," Fuqua said. "Nothing has ever taken place like that before."

The Amherst County Sheriff's Office urged residents not to travel to Elon, saying any unnecessary traffic would hamper response efforts.

A survey team from the National Weather Service in Blacksburg investigated that damage to determine the wind speeds within the tornado and the length of its track but had yet to issue a final report as of Monday evening.

That rotating severe thunderstorm rushed north along the U.S. 29 corridor out of North Carolina, where a tornado responsible for one death and at least 10 injuries tracked for nearly 34 miles after touching down in Greensboro.

The weather service also plans to investigate reports of tornadolike damage on the storm's path through Danville and Pittsylvania County.

The last tornado to strike Amherst was on July 9, 1990. There were no injuries from that brief storm. Campbell most recently saw a tornado on Feb. 24, 2016, but no tornadoes have tracked through Lynchburg, according to records going back to 1950.

A team from the weather service office in Wakefield also examined reports of tree damage from the Blackstone area of Nottoway County following a string of tornado warnings there Sunday evening.

The worst wind gusts avoided the Richmond area, although there were some reports of downed trees and high water as the line of storms moved through central Virginia early Monday.

Police departments in Richmond and the surrounding counties of Henrico, Hanover and Chesterfield said that there were relatively few problems from the storm and that they were not aware of any storm-related injuries.

Lt. Jason Elmore with Chesterfield Fire & EMS said his department responded to five calls of trees that went into homes.

"Fortunately, there were no injuries," Elmore said.

Sgt. James Cooper with the Hanover County Sheriff's Office said early Monday afternoon that one road in the western part of the county was closed due to high water. But for the most part, the county fared well during the storm, he said.

Statewide, 10 tornado warnings and 34 severe thunderstorm warnings were issued by the National Weather Service as the line of storms crossed from the mountains to the Chesapeake Bay.

Gov. Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency Monday morning to aid state and local response to Sunday night's storms.

A brief tornado northeast of New Castle on Sunday afternoon was apparently the first to ever hit Craig County.

Though it was on the ground for only about a minute, its 105-mph winds damaged six homes, flipped a truck and snapped dozens of trees.

According to a post-survey report issued by the weather service, two dogs in that neighborhood were "either displaced or lofted over 100 yards when their respective pens were destroyed." Both dogs escaped serious injury.

Hail reports were less common than damaging wind reports, but hailstones up to the size of tennis balls fell near Hillsville in Carroll County.

The storms brought 1.53 inches of rain to Richmond International Airport, and totals varied from roughly 0.75 inch to nearly 2 inches across the metro area.

Rainfall was heaviest northwest of Richmond, which is causing the James River to rise. The Westham gauge is forecast to crest at 12.3 feet early Wednesday morning, just barely above the 12-foot minor flood stage.