



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Tree cutting crews clean up the damage after a rare tornado toppled a tree across the back of a parked van in the Vernon-Alberta neighborhood of northeast Portland early Monday night. Several homes were also damaged. But amazingly, no injuries were reported.

Tornado Hit

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“It’s freaky. It’s crazy,” added Courtney Ferguson, the neighborhood mail-carrier for US Postal Service, who also reported seeing hail in the Hollywood District at the time.

Another woman, who lives just one block from the double felled trees, said she remembered the wind blowing unusually loud that evening.

“I thought of a tornado, and I’d never been through a tornado, but that’s sort of what it sounded like,” Sarah Meacham, 48, said.

Wendy Katila was finishing up dinner at Grain and Gristle, near the corner of Prescott and 16th Avenue, when it struck.

“We thought...there was some sort of major car accident or that kind of thing and were completely flabbergasted to see these trees all over this neighborhood down,” she said. “My heart goes out to these people because...not only are these trees obviously going to go, they’re magnificent trees, but obviously they have damage to their house.”

The National Weather Service used a combination of reports from eye witnesses and Doppler radar to determine the path and strength of the extreme winds.

The tornado was the fifth on record within Portland city limits in the history of record keeping.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Matthew Cullen told the Portland Observer another EF-0 tornado occurred in October on the north side of town, which contacted the ground for just a minute or two and caused mostly minor damage in an industrial area

and some felled trees.

An EF-3 tornado in April 1972 was the only other tornado in Portland before that, and it caused great harm in Vancouver on the same day, killing six and causing millions in damage. It had formed in Portland and crossed the Columbia River into Washington.

There were also tornados in February of 1904 and July of 1907, whose existence was uncovered through local research, Cullen said.

He added that tornados, though rare, are one of many weather hazards people should be cautious about in the Pacific Northwest.

“Tornados, while they don’t occur every year necessarily, in town, they can occur and people should always remain prepared for that possibility when they see strong showers or thunderstorms and review their safety plan for their home and for their workplace,” Cullen said.



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