

Mitigation Assessment Teams (MATs) for Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia

A massive tornado outbreak affected the Southern, Midwestern, and Eastern United States from April 25–28, 2011. Tornadoes rated as high as EF4 and EF5 on the Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale caused profound destruction in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia. Although the National Weather Service (NWS) is still evaluating and rating the tornadoes that occurred during this period, it appears to have been the most significant tornado outbreak—causing the most severe impact and loss of life—the U.S. has experienced in several generations.

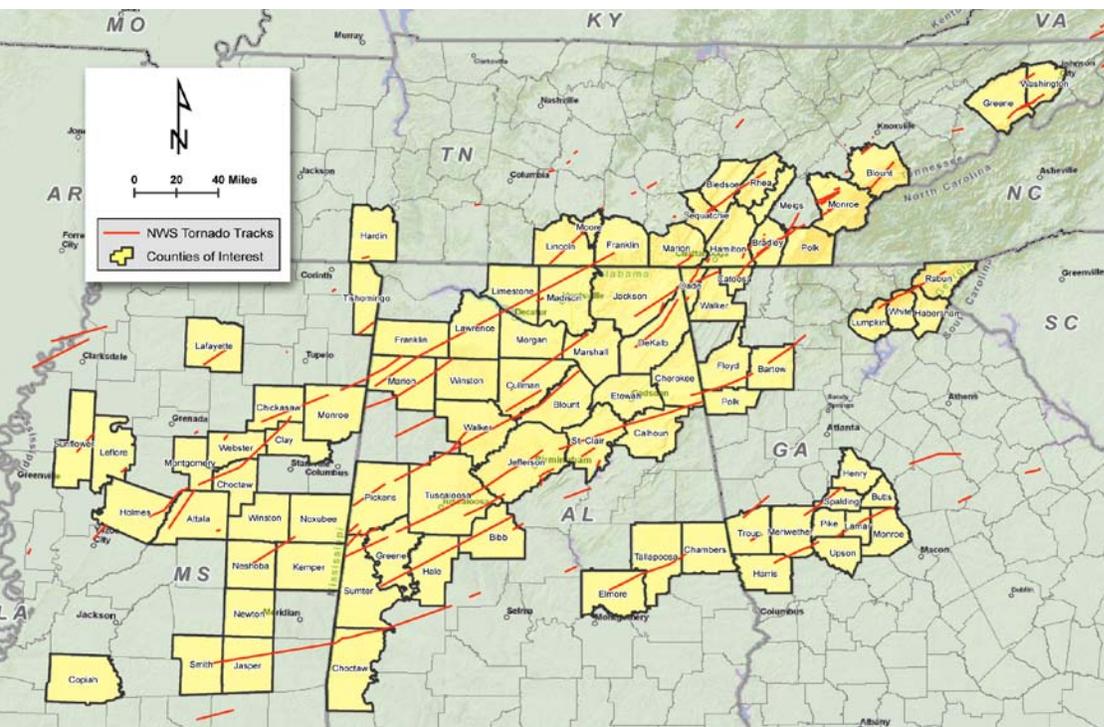
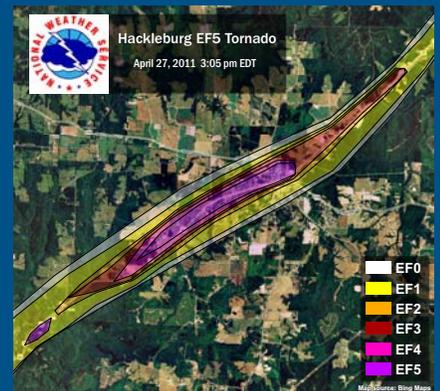
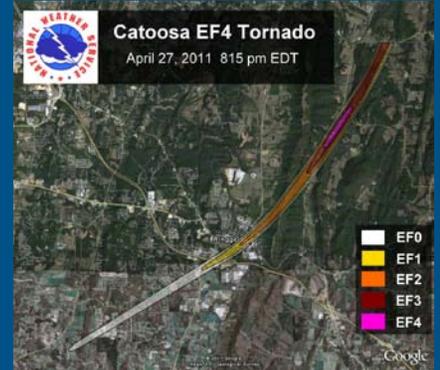
FEMA has deployed three MATs to tornado-damaged areas of AL, MS, TN, and GA. The MATs headed into the field on Friday, May 6, 2011, for a 7 to 8-day deployment. Their goals are: (1) investigate and assess the performance of safe rooms and shelters, and document damages observed; (2) investigate and assess residential building performance, focusing on newer construction where possible; (3) investigate and assess the performance of critical and essential facilities (e.g., hospitals, schools, emergency operation centers, fire stations, communication towers, etc.); (4) evaluate operational issues resulting from damage of critical facilities (e.g., the effect of damage on response and recovery); and (5) evaluate and provide field evidence to determine the tornado ratings on the EF Scale for the evaluated locations.

Each MAT consists of FEMA personnel and contractor subject matter experts. All teams start by working together in the most severely affected areas in Alabama to draw upon each member's technical expertise. The teams then branch out to other areas across the states of MS, AL, TN, and GA to assess building damage there. The three MATs will provide the following geographic coverage:

- MAT 1:** Alabama areas in and around Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Cullman, and northern cities including Huntsville
- MAT 2:** Alabama (Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Hackleburg); Georgia (Ringgold); and Tennessee sites around Chattanooga
- MAT 3:** Alabama (Tuscaloosa, Birmingham); Mississippi sites

The field effort will end with a 1-day meeting to discuss key observations and findings of the field investigation effort, outline the content of the MAT report, and identify the number and content of needed recovery advisories. A briefing will also be prepared and delivered to the Joint Field Offices prior to leaving the field.

In addition to FEMA's deployment of these MATs, the National Science Foundation and the University of Florida have deployed teams to investigate damage and building performance. The FEMA MATs will work closely with these teams to share data and findings.



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Check back periodically for MAT progress and photos: www.fema.gov/rebuild/mat/mat_news.shtm