



MRCC
Midwestern Regional
Climate Center

2022 TOP MIDWESTERN WEATHER EVENTS

100-car pileup; stranded on I-65: Treacherous travel

A winter storm on February 3-4 brought 6-15 inches of snow, along with ice and sleet, from Missouri to Michigan. Schools closed, flights were delayed, and an excessive number of accidents halted traffic on Interstates 39, 74, 55, and 57 in central Illinois. February 16-18 brought additional snow and ice accumulations that caused a 100-car pileup and a 2.5-day road closure on Interstate 39 in central Illinois. A fatal weather-induced crash on Interstate 65 also left northern Indiana drivers stranded overnight.



Dozens of tornadoes, including a deadly EF-4

An early-season severe weather outbreak on March 5-6 affected Iowa, Illinois, and surrounding states with over 60 reported tornadoes, large hail, and widespread damaging winds. In central Iowa, three supercells produced 10 confirmed tornadoes, including an EF-4 that killed six people and injured five along its 70-mile path. Hailstones in Iowa ranged from golf ball- to baseball-size, and a wind gust of 81 mph was measured in Rockford, Illinois.



Cold and windy. Why should today be different?

April was notably windy and cold across the Midwest, with nearly 900 low temperature records broken regionwide. Minnesota had its 10th coldest April dating back to 1895. Winds were unrelenting. Minneapolis recorded 22 days with gusts over 35 mph, the most since 1973, when records began. St. Louis, Chicago, and Indianapolis all had gusts over 35 mph for half the days in April. In Iowa, 18 weather stations reported the greatest number of hours on record of winds exceeding 20 mph.



So warm so soon. With humidity, of course

A record-setting heatwave brought hot and humid conditions to the Midwest from May 8-14. More than 1,500 daily high temperature records were broken or tied. Columbia, Missouri, had six consecutive days with record-high temperatures. Three heat-related fatalities were reported in Chicago, where a three-day minimum temperature record was set (72.3°F). Many regional locations exceeded 90°F for the first time in 2022, about a month earlier than normal. Dew point temperatures in the upper 70s and lower 80s pushed the heat index over 100°F in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin during the heatwave's peak.



Spring overstays its welcome in northern Minnesota

Above-normal winter snowpack, delayed ice-out, and repeated rainstorms in April and May spurred widespread historic flooding across northern Minnesota that lasted into summer. International Falls had the wettest spring since record-keeping began in 1895, with over 14 inches of precipitation. Record-high streamflows and inland lake levels resulted in significant flood impacts, including damaged homes, National Guard deployments, and numerous closures of roads, trails, and recreational areas.



'Wait, what? Again?' Yes, again: May-hem in Minnesota

An unsettled weather pattern contributed to one of the most active Mays in Minnesota history. Severe weather occurred over six days and, in most cases, multiple rounds per day, totaling 568 storm reports. There were 373 severe weather warnings, the highest since 1986, when reliable record-keeping began. Fifty-one tornadoes were reported, most happening over Memorial Day weekend. Three confirmed EF-2 tornadoes affected Grant and Wadena counties, causing damage to power poles, agricultural structures, trees, and buildings. Reports of large hail and high winds over 80 mph were numerous.



After the derecho, heat that just wouldn't cool off

A straight-line wind event (derecho) stretched from Wisconsin to Ohio on June 13, yielding more than 260 severe weather reports, including a 98-mph wind gust in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Over a half-million people were without power as excessive heat and humidity settled across the region. Columbus, Ohio, measured a record-high dew point temperature of 83°F (115°F heat index) on June 14. Temperatures in Louisville, Kentucky, stayed at or above 80°F for a record 120 consecutive hours from June 12-17. Regionwide, more than 1,500 high temperature records were set from June 13-23.



Too much too soon: Flash floods kill 37 in Kentucky

A stalled weather system fueled two historic flash flood events across the lower Midwest in late July. An estimated 8-12 inches of rain fell across the St. Louis, Missouri, area July 25-26, leading to numerous swift water rescues, flooded homes, closed interstate highways, and at least two fatalities. On July 27-28, 5-10 inches of rapid rainfall drenched eastern Kentucky, where more than 1,300 people were rescued by helicopter and boat as damaged infrastructure isolated communities, and 37 lives were lost. Damages for these two events totaled \$1.2 billion.



And when it doesn't rain ...

An extended period of low precipitation, warm temperatures, and high evaporative demand led to rapid drought intensification in late June and July across the lower Midwest, stressing crops, lawns, and streams.

Conditions started to improve in August before again spreading and intensifying. By October, persistent drought stress across the north central US led to record low flows on the lower Mississippi and Ohio rivers, severely affecting navigation. Burn bans, poor forage quality, and reduced hydropower production were reported across the Midwest.



Travel a pre-holiday nightmare. With frightful wind chills

A powerful, fast-moving Arctic cold front brought frigid temperatures, high winds, and snow to the central US from Dec. 22-25. Dangerous wind chills from -20°F to -40°F gripped the Midwest as winds gusted 30-50 mph and higher. Chicago and Des Moines clocked more than 80 consecutive hours with subzero wind chills. While snowfall across the lower Midwest was a modest 1-5 inches, high winds caused extensive blowing and drifting that halted ground and air transportation for days. Localized power outages, busted water mains, frozen pipes, and at least 14 fatalities were reported across the region.

