



## In the blink of an eye, tornado 'wreaked havoc' in Webster, Dudley



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

**Mary Ann Dungal said she got a message on her phone and got in a closet until it was over.**

**By [Matt Rocheleau](#)**

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The swirling clouds of a thunderstorm turned into a tornado, touching down at 9:48 a.m. Saturday in Dudley. The next minute it was over, but its winds, swirling at up to 110 miles per hour, had "wreaked havoc" through a half-mile stretch of Dudley and its neighbor, Webster, the National Weather Service said.

Bricks from an old rooftop had rained down onto Main Street in Webster. Storefront windows were blown out, littering the road with broken glass, according to a [report](#) released Monday by the weather service.

The walls of an apartment complex were bent, a gas station roof was twisted, bark was ripped off trees, many of which were snapped, as were utility poles, [cutting power](#) to thousands of homes.

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One person suffered minor injuries when an automobile was struck by falling debris, according to the weather service's final report on the tornado.

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Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency officials [said previously](#) that about 43 people were displaced as a result.

The weather service concluded the twister was 300 yards wide. Its wind speeds topped out at about 110 miles per hour, making it "a high-end EF-1 tornado" on the Enhanced Fujita scale.

(The six-level scale ranges from "EF-0," the weakest category with wind speeds as low as 65 miles per hour, to "EF-5" for tornadoes with wind speeds exceeding 200 miles

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per hour.)

Massachusetts within a 10-day stretch.

Weather service officials said they issued a severe thunderstorm warning 17 minutes before the tornado touched down. Four minutes later they upgraded the alert to a tornado warning, which triggered wireless emergency alerts to go out.



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**The twister damaged buildings and downed trees and utility poles.**

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“Nearly everyone we spoke to had heard the warning via their cell phones well in advance,” the report

said. "This undoubtedly played a big role in the fact that there were no fatalities."

Weather service officials said they also surveyed nearby Sutton and Grafton, but found the tree damage in those communities was not indicative of a tornado.

The storm that caused damaged in those towns and generated the tornado in Dudley and Webster also spawned another weaker tornado just moments earlier in Woodstock, Conn.

That tornado was classified as an EF-0 with wind speeds reaching 80 miles per hour. It was eight yards wide and journeyed about five miles into Thompson, Conn., on a "discontinuous path." It lasted about four minutes, the report said.

It sliced a single tree in half and flattened small portions of two separate corn fields. No injuries were reported from that tornado.



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### Another view of the damage on Main Street.

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