



Major tornadoes in the Netherlands: Reconstruction and re-rating using the International Fujita scale

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The Netherlands lie within a broad zone stretching from western France into northwestern Germany where strong tornadoes (rated IF2 and above) occur more frequently than in areas further south and east. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the country experienced several powerful tornadoes, as well as multiple outbreaks that also affected neighboring countries.

Among the most notable events was the 1845 outbreak, which began with a tragic tornado in Montville, France, and included at least two tornadoes in the Netherlands—one of which caused widespread destruction in Zevenbergen (North Brabant). Another devastating tornado struck Borculo (Gelderland) in 1925, followed by an outbreak that impacted eastern Netherlands and nearby regions in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony, Germany. The town of Neede (Gelderland) suffered particularly severe damage. In 1950, a very strong tornado tore through the Veluwe forest in central Netherlands, fortunately sparing populated areas.

The last major outbreak occurred over two days, 24 and 25 June 1967, producing a series of violent tornadoes across France (Palluel, Pommereuil, Davenescourt), Belgium (Oostmalle), and the Netherlands (Ulicoten, Chaam in North Brabant, and Tricht in Gelderland). After 1967, a few additional tragic events occurred, including the deadliest: a tornado-induced crash of a regional jet in 1981 near Moerdijk (North Brabant), which claimed the lives of all 16 people on board.

Our objective was to compile a comprehensive overview of these significant tornado outbreaks and, for the first time, assign intensity ratings using the International Fujita (IF) scale where possible. To achieve this, we examined newspaper and media archives, official reports, photographs, and drawings to support our intensity assessments. The work intends to show that violent and deadly tornadoes, although rare, affect the relatively small country of the Netherlands several times per century.