

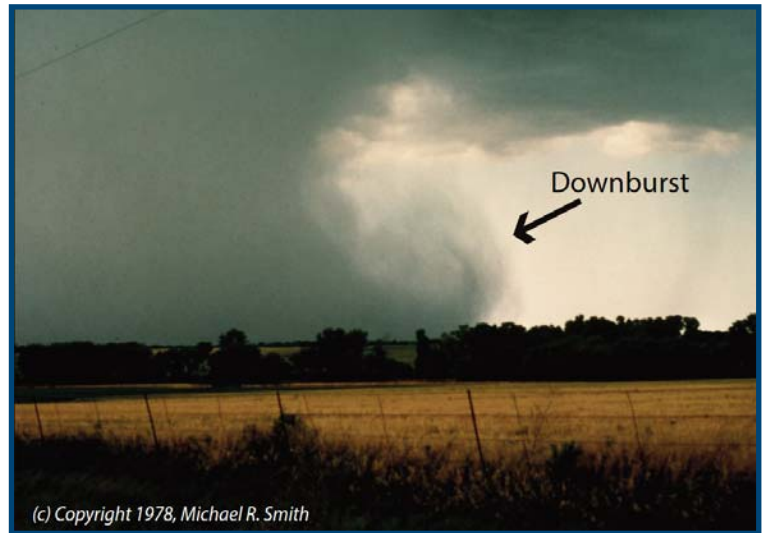
Dangerous Downbursts

A “downburst” is a unique form of extreme winds unknown to meteorologists prior to 1977 when it was discovered by Drs. Ted Fujita and Horace Byers. While they can occur anywhere, the Dallas area has bitter experience with downbursts. Delta Airlines’ flight 191 crashed in a downburst at DFW International Airport August 2, 1985, killing 135.

In the quarter century since that horrible August day, meteorologists have made tremendous strides forecasting and warning of these small, but deadly, storms. AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions applied that knowledge at 2:50pm May 2, 2009 when we issued a SkyGuard® warning of 65 mph winds for a client located in the Dallas suburb of Irving, TX. Based on radar, the winds struck between 3:10 and 3:15pm. A post-storm survey by the National Weather Service determined winds were “nearly 70 mph.”

These winds collapsed the Dallas Cowboys’ practice facility where a “mini-camp” was in progress. According to NBC Sports, Cowboys’ owner Jerry Jones stated, “We did not get [a] good warning.” This may be because governmental sources did not issue a warning until 3:06pm, 16 minutes after AccuWeather’s and just moments before the winds occurred.

People are your most precious asset. Protect your people, operations, and revenues with SkyGuard®. Call us today. The next storm may already be on the way.



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First-ever photo of a downburst, taken by Mike Smith, Certified Consulting Meteorologist. The curling raindrops are a visual signature of a downburst. This photo, one of a series of seven, confirmed Fujita and Byers' downburst theory. AccuWeather is among the leaders in the field of downburst warnings.

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