



Joplin, Missouri, Tornado of May 22, 2011

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Joplin, Missouri, Tornado of May 22, 2011: Structural Damage Survey and Case for Tornado-Resilient Building Codes presents the observations, findings, and recommendations of an engineering reconnaissance team that surveyed residential structures and schools in the tornado path shortly after the event. The tornado, which was rated a 5 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, cut a seven-mile swath through Joplin, Missouri; it destroyed more than 5,000 buildings and killed more than 150 people. The team's data collection focused on recording the mechanisms of structural failure under tornado wind loads. One important finding is that failures could be attributed to inadequate load paths as well as to wind speeds that exceeded building code design levels. Compliance with the building code requirements for hurricane-prone areas would have mitigated some of the damage. Topics include: overview of the Joplin tornado; inspection methodology; performance of residential buildings; case studies of building performance; performance of commercial buildings and critical facilities; new design philosophy regarding tornadoes; conclusions and recommendations. This ground-breaking report is must-reading for structural engineers, construction professionals, building code officials, and risk managers working in tornado-prone regions of the United States.

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