# Severe Thunderstorm in Houston Leaves Trail of Destruction and Fatalities



A severe thunderstorm in the Houston area on Thursday left a trail of destruction, resulting in the deaths of at least seven people and widespread power outages as temperatures rise. The storm, with wind speeds up to 100 mph and a tornado, significantly damaged buildings, including skyscrapers, and caused power cuts affecting over 555,000 customers, according to PowerOutage.us.

Houston Fire Chief Samuel Peña reported that four individuals in Houston lost their lives, including two from fallen trees, one from a crane accident, and another in a lightning-induced trailer fire. In Harris County, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez reported three more deaths, including a man moving a downed electrical pole and another who collapsed after trying to power an oxygen tank from his truck.

The National Weather Service classified the weather event as a derecho due to its length and intensity, characterized by consistent high wind gusts. The restoration of power is expected to take weeks, and the City of Houston has established cooling centers due to the ongoing heat.

Houston Mayor John Whitmire, who declared a state of disaster for the city, emphasized the need for safety and urged residents to avoid affected areas. Efforts are underway to repair the extensive damage to CenterPoint Energy’s transmission and distribution systems, with thousands of workers deployed for restoration.

Emergency services have issued warnings about additional severe weather, including the potential for flash floods and damaging winds in parts of the Southeast and Gulf Coast over the weekend. Meanwhile, the Houston Health Department is distributing portable air conditioners to vulnerable residents due to the smog warning and high temperatures forecasted.

President Joe Biden issued a disaster declaration for seven Texas counties, making federal aid available for storm recovery.