



Exceptional weather events

Type of event:
Windstorm

Date:
December 1997



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Windstorm of 24th December 1997

In Munster and south Leinster this was a very severe event, comparable with the storms of January 1974 and 'Debbie' in September 1961. At Valentia Observatory (Cahirciveen) the highest gust of 88kt (101 m.p.h) equalled the record gust while maximum ten-minute mean windspeeds reached violent storm force 11 on the Beaufort scale and were the highest in over 55 years of record. Cork Airport had its highest winds since 1974 and it also experienced violent storm conditions for some hours. Shannon Airport had slightly higher winds than Cork Airport and its gust of 95 m.p.h. was the highest recorded there since 1961.

Over much of Leinster, especially the south and east conditions were also severe. In the Dublin area there were record gusts of 85 to 95 m.p.h. with maximum ten-minute winds of storm force. Similar gusts were recorded in south Leinster and at Kilkenny the strong gale force wind of 47kt (54 m.p.h) was its highest in forty years of record.

While Munster and south Leinster had the most severe winds, Ulster, Connaught, midland and northern parts of Leinster were also considerably affected. At their peak winds reached gale to strong gale force, briefly touching storm force in exposed areas. The general range of gusts was 65 to 80 m.p.h, with a few gusts to 85 or even 90 m.p.h.