

'Tornado' destroys motel in Oklahoma, says official

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A group looks at a submerged truck on a road near the Arkansas River south of Jenks, Okla., on Friday. (AP)

Oklahoma: A likely tornado destroyed a motel and caused other damage in the Oklahoma City area, according to the National Weather Service.

Meteorologist Rick Smith in Norman told The Associated Press that the suspected twister hit El Reno on Saturday night as a powerful storm system rolled through the state. Crews will arrive on the scene Sunday to determine with severity of the damage to the town just west of Oklahoma City.

The American Budget Value Inn was destroyed by the storm. Images at the scene showed emergency crews sifting through the rubble after part of the motel's second story collapsed into a pile of debris strewn about the first floor and parking lot.

Trailers at a mobile home park adjacent to the motel were also damaged, as was part of a nearby car dealership.

"We have absolutely experienced a traumatic event," El Reno Mayor Matt White said during a news conference early Sunday. "We've had an incident where a tornado has basically hit a mobile home park and a hotel, and some other local businesses."

White said several people were transported to hospitals in Oklahoma City, but did not give an exact number.

"We're doing a search and rescue right now! we have all hands on deck," he said.

- AP