



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on September 23, 2011

“Global Warming”? Extreme Weather Deaths Nosedive

Regardless of global temperatures, fewer people are dying from extreme weather events, according to a new study published by the libertarian think tank Reason Foundation. Its research revealed the global weather-related death rate has declined by 98 percent since the 1920s. Deaths from severe weather now contribute only 0.07 percent to global mortality.



The authors analyzed more than a century of data and chronicled deaths caused by extreme weather worldwide between 1900 and 2010. They found the most dangerous decade to be 1920 to 1929 when 241 deaths per million people in the world occurred annually. That number declined to 208 in the 1930s and reached an astounding low at 5.4 deaths per million per year from 2000 to 2010. They noted the impressiveness of these statistics “in spite of a four-fold rise in population and much more complete reporting of such events.” The discovery led them to title their report [*Wealth and Safety: The Amazing Decline in Deaths from Extreme Weather in an Era of Global Warming, 1900-2010*](#).

Interestingly, the three areas that most affected the drastic decline in weather-related death rates are the same three areas supposedly most affected by climate change: droughts, floods, and severe storms. Death rates from droughts dropped 99.9 percent from 1920 to 2010. Rates of flood deaths declined more than 98 percent since 1930, and mortality rates related to storms dropped by 55 percent since the 1970s.

According to climate change doomsayers, these numbers should be reversed. They blame greenhouse gas emissions for accelerating global warming and exacerbating extreme weather. For years they have predicted a resulting rise in worldwide death tolls and economic losses. *Wealth and Safety* cites several sources, including the United Nations, forecasting disaster. The point of their fear-mongering is summed up in a quote of Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, who declared, “We need an international agreement to contain climate change and reduce its widespread suffering.”

Prophets of eco-catastrophe are quick to stifle those whom they label “deniers.” They say science on the issue is settled, but the new study’s lead author can hardly be considered a renegade. [Dr. Indur M. Goklany](#) is the assistant director of Programs & Science & Technology Policy for the U.S. Department of the Interior. He has served as U.S. delegate to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for



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20 years.

Goklany pointed out the irony of data indicating that the average number of deaths worldwide from cold weather during each year of the past decade far exceeded the average number of deaths from extreme weather events. He put things into perspective by comparing a World Health Organization (WHO) estimate of 58.8 million deaths worldwide from all causes to the average annual weather-related death toll of 38,321. "Notably, over at least the last 50 years the general decline in annual mortality due to extreme weather events ... has occurred despite an increase in all-cause mortality," writes Goklany. He attributes any unexpectedness of these statistics to "the quite inordinate, though all-too-human, focus by authorities and the media on extreme weather events."

WHO blames global warming for additional deaths by linking it to causes such as malnutrition and disease. Goklany explains, however, that even using WHO's scientific shortcut methodologies to arrive at death tolls, "global warming" still accounts for less than 0.3 percent of deaths worldwide. He said, "Thus, unsurprisingly, comparative analysis of the global mortality and disease burden shows that other public health issues far outrank effects attributed to global warming by advocates of draconian emissions controls."



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