

Thunderstorms and Lightning

More people die each year from lightning than from tornadoes and hurricanes!

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: advises when and where severe thunderstorms are most likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to TV or radio to know when warnings are issued. Watches are intended to heighten public awareness and should not be confused with warnings.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property for those in the path of the storm.

What Can You Do!

When Thunderstorms Approach ...

If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the

storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately!

Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in convertible automobiles.

Get out of boats and away from water.

Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressors.

Get to higher ground if flash flooding or flooding is possible. Once flooding begins, abandon cars and climb to higher ground. **Most flash flood deaths occur in automobiles.**

If caught outdoors and no shelter is nearby find a spot away from trees, fences, and poles.

In the United States, lightning is the second biggest weather killer, next to floods. Most victims are struck in the open, such as on beaches or golf courses, or when they take shelter from the rain under a tree. But lightning can be dangerous in your home.

Ways to avoid becoming a victim of lightning

1. If you're outdoors, you should rush to safety at the first flash of lightning, crack of thunder or even darkening of the sky.
2. Hazy skies, especially in the East, can often hide thunderstorms.
3. All thunderstorms are dangerous. Forecasters can't tell, even with the most sophisticated instruments, whether a storm will produce hundreds of lightning flashes or only a few.
4. Never take shelter under a tree.

CARS OFFER LIGHTNING SHELTER

1. Lightning hits car.
2. Current flows through metal toward ground.
3. Lightning jumps from wheel to ground, can blow out tire.

Start counting when you see a lightning flash. If you hear thunder five seconds later, the lightning is a mile away; 10 seconds later, two miles away.

On the average, around 40 million lightning strikes hit the ground each year in the United States. And all thunderstorms generate lightning, the USA's second biggest weather killer.