



American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Mental Health
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Insurance Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Kelli Blackwell, Ohio EMA, 614-799-3694
Mary Jo Parker, NWS-Wilmington Office, 937-383-0031

SUMMERTIME IS PEAK TIME FOR THUNDER AND LIGHTNING STORMS
Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 23-29

COLUMBUS, OH – In an annual coordinated effort with the National Weather Service, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness promotes June 23-29 as Lightning Safety Awareness Week and encourages all Ohioans to know what to do before, during and after thunderstorms, and to practice severe weather safety and preparedness throughout the summer.

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), as of June 9, there had been seven lightning fatalities this year: two in Florida; two in Illinois; and one each in Louisiana, Missouri and Texas. All were outside; four were in or near bodies of water. A total of 28 people in 17 states died of lightning strikes in 2012, including an Ohio man who was doing yard work at the time.

Although the number of lightning fatalities continues to decrease over the years, lightning strikes continue to be one of the top three storm-related killers in the United States. It is important to note that lightning injures more people than it kills. The best protection from lightning is to avoid the threat.

Performing this simple measure can dramatically reduce the chance of severe injury or death during a storm: **When thunder roars, go indoors!** Stop outdoor activities and seek shelter immediately.

Summertime is peak season for thunderstorm activity in Ohio. Preparedness for thunderstorms – or any severe weather incident – is key.

Be Informed. Know what to do before, during and after severe weather. For thunder and lightning safety tips, click on: www.ready.gov/thunderstorms-lightning

Make a Plan. Develop a disaster plan to respond to all hazards, including thunderstorms and lightning. Sign up for First Aid or CPR courses. Practice disaster plans by conducting safety drills.

Build a Kit. Organize or restock emergency supply kits for the home and vehicle to be prepared for any incident.

The NWS and Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness also suggest the following lightning safety measures:

Watch for developing thunderstorms – Thunderstorms are most likely to develop on spring or summer days, but can also occur at night and during any season. Listen to local weather reports on radio or television stations. Know the difference between storm watches and warnings. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert that notifies when hazardous weather is in or near your area.

Seek shelter before an approaching thunderstorm – Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from where it's raining. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek immediate shelter. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last rumble of thunder. Continue to listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio newscasts for weather updates.

Protect your pets – Outside dog houses are not lightning-safe. Dogs that are chained to trees or wire runners have no protection from lightning. Bring your pets inside during thunderstorms.

Minimize your risk – Most lightning strikes occur during the summer when people are participating in outdoor recreational activities. At the first clap of thunder, stop outdoor activities and try to find indoor shelter immediately. If swimming, boating or fishing, get away from the water as quickly as possible. Find shelter in a substantial building (such as a home, school, office building or shopping center) or a hard-topped vehicle. Picnic shelters, car ports, baseball dugouts and convertible vehicles are not safe shelters during thunder and lightning storms. Do not use electrical equipment. Stay away from water/plumbing sources. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder before going outside again.

Helping someone struck by lightning – If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and seek immediate medical attention. A lightning victim does not carry an electrical charge and is safe to touch. Knowing and implementing first aid measures, which include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), can help a person struck by lightning survive. Local American Red Cross chapters and fire departments often offer first aid and CPR classes.

For additional information on lightning safety, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov or the NWS site at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

OCSWA is comprised of 14 organizations and state agencies that are dedicated in teaching Ohioans severe weather safety and preparedness.

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