

SUMMERTIME IS PEAK TIME FOR THUNDER AND LIGHTNING STORMS

Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 18-24

COLUMBUS, OH – In an annual coordinated effort with the National Weather Service (NWS), the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is promoting June 18-24 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.

Summer begins on June 21, and summertime is the peak season for thunderstorms in the United States.

So far this year, according to the NWS, there has been one lightning-strike fatality. Last year, there were 38 lightning fatalities in a total of 17 states, including an 8-year-old boy from Coshocton, Ohio.

Although lightning fatalities in 2016 were above the average of about 30 per year, overall, the reduction in lightning-related deaths has dropped. The NWS attributes this reduction (from about 50 deaths per year) to greater awareness of lightning danger, and people seeking safety when thunderstorms threaten.

There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of the storm. Lightning safety is an inconvenience that can save your life. So, **“When thunder roars, go indoors!”** Stop outdoor activities and seek safe shelter immediately.

The NWS and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness encourage Ohioans to prepare for thunder and lightning storms – and all severe weather events.

If thunder and lightning storms are happening in your area, you should do the following:

- Listen to current weather reports on local TV or radio stations, or use a battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio.
- Avoid contact with corded phones and devices, including those plugged into electrical outlets for recharging. Cordless and wireless phones not connected to wall outlets are safe to use.
- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. If you can do so safely, unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers, and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Avoid contact with plumbing and water. Do not wash your hands, take a shower. Do not wash dishes or do laundry. Water and plumbing conduct electricity.

If you're caught outside:

- Take shelter in a sturdy, substantial building. Avoid isolated sheds or small structures in open areas, such as baseball dugouts.
- Avoid natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area. Also avoid hilltops or open fields.
- Avoid being in or near bodies of water such as the beach, a swimming pool, fishing, or on a boat.
- Avoid contact with anything metal – tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, and bicycles.
- If driving during a severe thunderstorm, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the

vehicle and turn on the emergency hazard lights until the heavy rain stops.

To minimize the risk of being struck by lightning, just remember “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!” and stay indoors until at least 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder or crack of lightning.

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 16 organizations and state agencies that are dedicated in teaching Ohioans severe weather safety and preparedness.

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“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov