



Thunderstorms ⚡ Lightning

Weather Emergency

Terms to Know

Severe Thunderstorm **WARNING** —Severe thunderstorms are occurring in the warning area. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm.

Severe Thunderstorm **WATCH** —Severe thunderstorms are possible in the watch area. Watch the sky and stay tuned to television or radio for weather updates.

Be Prepared BEFORE a Thunderstorm Occurs:

- Thunderstorm warnings are issued by county. Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors. Keep an operating battery, television, or radio with you.
- Have an emergency plan. Identify shelters and establish procedures to take cover if a storm approaches.
- Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. This is the best way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Secure outdoor objects, take lightweight objects inside, and check for other hazards in close proximity to your building(s).
- Unplug appliances or ensure that they have surge protection. Do not use the telephone; turn off portable air conditioners.
- A backup generator is always useful in an emergency situation. If you have one, inspect it periodically to make sure it will function properly when needed.

DURING and AFTER a Thunderstorm:

- Listen to the television or radio for current weather reports and emergency information.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- Get off athletic fields and out of water. Wait at least thirty minutes from the last acknowledgement of thunder or lightning before returning to your activity.
- Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in places like ball field dugouts.

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- If lightning is occurring and a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hardtop automobile and keep the windows up.
- If caught outdoors and there is no shelter nearby, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles. If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stands on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your head on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines, trees, broken glass, debris and disaster areas.
- Avoid using bath and shower facilities.
- Cellular phones and cordless/wireless/portable phones are safe to use; however, static electricity may impede performance.
- Avoid using televisions for news updates. Battery-operated radios set to a local FM band are the safest and best sources for receiving emergency communication.

Remember: If you can hear it or see it, Take Cover!



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Lightning Safety Institute

<http://www.lightningsafety.com>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/thunderstorm/index.shtm>