

# Thunderstorm Safety Tips

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch:** Severe thunderstorms are possible. Watch the sky and listen to the radio or television for more information. Be prepared to take shelter.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning:** Severe thunderstorms are occurring. Take shelter. Turn on a battery-operated radio or television to receive warnings and severe weather statements.

## **Before Thunderstorms:**

- Purchase a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with battery backup and a tone-alert feature, which automatically alerts you when a Watch or a Warning is issued. Know the county(s) in which you live and work. The National Weather Service uses county names when watches, warning and advisories are issued and broadcast. A Specific Area Message Encoder (SAME) weather radio can be programmed to alarm only for a specific county or a group of adjacent counties.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended outdoor periods and postpone plans if severe weather is imminent.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers. Teach children how and when to call 911 for emergency assistance.
- Choose a friend or family member who lives out of the area for separated family members to call to report their whereabouts and conditions.
- Keep important documents and records in a safe deposit box or other secure locations.
- Maintain a disaster supply kit.

## **During Thunderstorm:**

- Close all windows and doors. Draw the shades or blinds to reduce the risk from flying glass if window or door glass breaks due to high winds.
- Monitor the radio or television for emergency information or instructions.
- Avoid using the telephone or other electrical appliances until the storm passes.
- Turn off air conditioners. If lightning strikes, a power surge could damage the compressor.
- Delay taking baths or showers until after the storm passes.
- If outdoors, seek shelter immediately. If you can hear thunder, you are probably close enough to the storm to get struck by lightning.
- If you are in a boat when a thunderstorm threatens, you should attempt to reach shore as quickly as possible.

- If you are driving, pull safely to the shoulder away from trees and power lines. Lightning can flash from trees or power poles into a vehicle through the radio antenna. Normally, in the open, a vehicle is a safe shelter from lightning. Avoid touching metal parts of the vehicle when lightning is nearby.
- If you find yourself in a position where there is no immediate shelter available, find a low spot away from trees and power poles where you can squat low.

**After Thunderstorms:**

- Monitor the radio or television for emergency information or instructions.
- Check for injured victims. Render first aid if necessary. Most lightning strike victims can be revived with CPR. Do not attempt to move severely injured victims unless absolutely necessary. Wait for emergency medical assistance to arrive.
- Take photos or videotape the damage to your home or property.
- Do not make unnecessary telephone calls.
- If driving, be alert for hazards on the roadway.
- Check on neighbors or relatives who may require special assistance.