

Summer Storm Safety: What You Should Know

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CHICAGO – Summer is finally here, and while that means fun in the sun, it can also bring the threat of dangerous storms. In recognition of Lightning Safety Awareness Week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Region 5 office wants you to learn how to reduce your lightning risk while outdoors.

“If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat,” said FEMA Region V Acting Administrator Janet M. Odesloo. “Seek shelter as quickly as possible. There is no place outside that is safe when a thunderstorm is in the area.”

Substantial buildings such as offices, schools, and homes would offer good protection. Once inside, stay away from windows and doors and anything that conducts electricity such as corded phones, wiring, plumbing, and anything connected to these. If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk:

- Never shelter under an isolated tree, tower or utility pole. Lightning tends to strike the taller objects in an area.
- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks.
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences.
- Never lie flat on the ground.

The best way to protect yourself against lightning injury or death is to monitor the weather and postpone or cancel outdoor activities when thunderstorms are in the forecast. Lightning can strike from 10 miles away, so if you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being struck by lightning.

For additional information on lightning safety—wherever you may be this summer—visit www.ready.gov/thunderstorms-lightning. You can find more valuable storm safety tips by visiting www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. Consider also



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downloading the free FEMA app, available for your Android, Apple or Blackberry device, so you have the information at your fingertips to prepare for severe weather.

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