Building a Weather-Ready Nation

Lightning Safety and Awareness

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors! - Lightning kills over 50 people in the U.S. each year and inflicts life-long debilitating injuries on hundreds more. Go inside if you hear thunder, but keep away from corded telephones, electrical appliances, and plumbing. Lightning is the second greatest cause of storm-related deaths in the U.S., killing more than tornadoes or hurricanes. Lightning also inflicts life-long debilitating injuries on many more than it kills. **NO PLACE OUTSIDE IS SAFE NEAR A THUNDERSTORM!** Learn more at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Lightning Statistics - According to statistics kept by the National Weather Service, the 30 year average for lightning fatalities across the country is 61. Lightning usually claims only one or two victims at a time, and because lightning does not cause mass destruction, such as from a tornado event or a hurricane, lightning generally receives much less attention than the more destructive storm-related events. Due to under reporting, it is estimated that, more realistically, about 100 - 120 deaths per year occur because of lightning. Documented lightning injuries in the United States average 300 per year; however undocumented lightning injuries are likely much higher In Missouri there have been 97 deaths attributed to lightning from 1959 - 2011, an average of 2 deaths per year. There were 3 fatalities in Missouri in 2011.

Safe Vehicles - A **safe vehicle** is any fully enclosed metal-topped vehicle such as a hard-topped car, minivan, bus, truck, etc. While inside a safe vehicle, do not use electronic devices such as radio communications during a thunderstorm. If you drive into a thunderstorm, slow down and use extra caution. If possible, pull off the road into a safe area. Do not leave the vehicle during a thunderstorm. **Unsafe vehicles** include convertibles, golf carts, riding mowers, open cab construction equipment and boats without cabins.

Bolts from the Blue - A lightning flash can travel horizontally many miles away from the thunderstorm and then strike the ground. These types of lightning flashes are called "Bolts from the Blue" because they seem to come out of a clear blue sky. While blue sky may exist overhead (or in part of the sky overhead) a thunderstorm is always located 5 to 10 miles (and sometimes even farther) away. Although these flashes are rare, they have caused fatalities.

Outdoors, Camping, Floating, At the Lake - If you are at the lake, and you hear thunder, what should you do? Go to your car! Do NOT seek shelter under the picnic shelters or in a tent. These are not safe places. Wait 30 minutes until after the last rumble of thunder before going back to the lake.

Lightning Safety Resources

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http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/lightning/resources/lightning-safety.pdf

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/

From your National Weather Service in Springfield, Missouri