PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HEADQUARTERS WASHINGTON DC
945 AM EDT TUE JUN 16 2009

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK CAMPAIGN FOR 2009

WHEN THUNDER ROARS...GO INDOORS


THE 2009 CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF LIGHTNING INJURIES ON VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE CAMPAIGN FEATURES A COMPELLING VIDEO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT BY ELLEN BRYAN...A MISS OHIO AND MISS AMERICA HOPEFUL...AND HER SISTER CHRISTINA BRYAN...WHO WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING NINE YEARS AGO. ALSO NEW THIS YEAR IS A TRIFOLD BROCHURE WITH LIGHTNING SAFETY INFORMATION.

THE GOAL OF THIS CAMPAIGN IS TO HELP PEOPLE ACROSS THE NATION UNDERSTAND THE DANGERS OF LIGHTNING SO THAT THEY TAKE THE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS WHEN THUNDERSTORMS THREATEN. LAST YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES...HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE INJURED OR KILLED BY LIGHTNING. LIGHTNING INJURIES CAN BE LIFELONG AND EXTREMELY DEBILIATING. ON AVERAGE LIGHTNING KILLS ABOUT 60 PEOPLE ANNUALLY IN THE UNITED STATES.

LIGHTNING DEATHS AND INJURIES OCCUR MOST FREQUENTLY UNDER AND NEAR TREES AND IN OPEN AREAS. LIGHTNING SAFETY IS CRUCIAL WHEN YOU ARE OUTDOORS...ESPECIALLY SINCE SO MANY SUMMER ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE IN OPEN AREAS SUCH AS ATHLETIC FIELDS...GOLF COURSES AND BEACHES. IF YOU HEAR THUNDER...SEEK SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY IN A FULLY ENCLOSED BUILDING OR HARD-TOPPED VEHICLE. THERE IS NO SAFE PLACE OUTDOORS.

PEOPLE ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO LIGHTNING STRIKES WHEN A STORM IS APPROACHING OR EXITING THEIR AREA. LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE MORE THAN 10 MILES AWAY FROM A THUNDERSTORM. RAINFALL IS NOT AN INDICATOR OF YOUR RISK.
FOR BEING STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK IS ONLINE AT:

HTTP://WWW.LIGHTNINGSAFETY.NOAA.GOV

THIS WEB SITE PROVIDES LIGHTNING SAFETY INFORMATION...STATISTICS...AND INSIGHT TO THE SCIENCE AND MEDICAL ASPECTS OF LIGHTNING AND LIGHTNING INJURIES. THE SITE ALSO PROVIDES OUTREACH MATERIALS...INCLUDING POSTERS AND PUBLIC SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS...TO ASSIST WITH LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS EFFORTS.

SOME LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS:

1. KNOW THE WEATHER FORECAST BEFORE YOU HEAD OUTDOORS...ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS. A PORTABLE NOAA WEATHER RADIO IS A GREAT WAY TO MONITOR THE LATEST FORECASTS AND WARNINGS WHILE OUTDOORS. OUR PARTNERS IN THE PRIVATE METEOROLOGICAL SECTOR CAN PROVIDE CUSTOMIZED WEATHER INFORMATION...ALERTS...WEATHER RADAR...AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES.

2. WHEN OUTDOORS...KEEP AN EYE ON THE SKY. LOOK FOR DARKENING CLOUDS...FLASHES OF LIGHTNING OR INCREASING WIND...WHICH MAY BE SIGNS OF AN APPROACHING THUNDERSTORM. GET TO A SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HEAR THUNDER. IF A COMPLETELY ENCLOSSED BUILDING IS NOT NEARBY...GET INSIDE A HARD-TOPPED ALL-METAL VEHICLE. REMAIN IN SAFE SHELTER FOR 30 MINUTES AFTER THE LAST CLAP OF THUNDER.

3. PLACES TO AVOID SEEKING SHELTER DURING THUNDERSTORMS INCLUDE: BENEATH OR CLOSE TO TREES...SHEDS...CARPORTS...OPEN GARAGES...DUGOUTS...COVERED PATIOS...PICNIC SHELTERS...BLEACHERS...BEACHES AND OPEN FIELDS. ALSO STAY AWAY FROM CLOTHES LINES...FENCES...AND ELECTRICALLY CONDUCTIVE OBJECTS.

4. GET OUT OF THE WATER. IT IS A GREAT CONDUCTOR OF ELECTRICITY. GET OUT OF SMALL BOATS AND CANOES...AND STAY AWAY FROM POOLS AND LAKES. LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE THE WATER AND TRAVEL SOME DISTANCE FROM ITS POINT OF CONTACT.

5. IN ADDITION TO DIRECT STRIKES...LIGHTNING GENERATES ELECTRICAL SURGES THAT CAN DAMAGE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT SOME DISTANCE FROM THE ACTUAL STRIKE. TYPICAL SURGE PROTECTORS WILL NOT PROTECT EQUIPMENT FROM A LIGHTNING STRIKE. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE...UNPLUG ANY APPLIANCES OR ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT FROM ALL CONDUCTORS WELL BEFORE A THUNDERSTORM THREATENS. DO NOT WAIT TO UNPLUG EQUIPMENT UNTIL DURING A THUNDERSTORM AS THERE IS A RISK YOU COULD BE STRUCK.

6. LIGHTNING VICTIMS DO NOT CARRY AN ELECTRICAL
CHARGE...ARE SAFE TO TOUCH...AND NEED URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION. CARDIAC ARREST IS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR THOSE WHO DIE. SOME DEATHS CAN BE PREVENTED IF THE VICTIM RECEIVES THE PROPER FIRST AID IMMEDIATELY. CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY AND PERFORM CPR IF THE PERSON IS UNRESPONSIVE OR NOT BREATHING.

REMEMBER...WHEN THUNDER ROARS...GO INDOORS.

NATIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENTS ARE ONLINE AT:

HTTP://WWW.WEATHER.GOV/OS/NOTIF.HTM

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