

## **Thunderstorms/Lightning Safety Tips**

The following safety tips can protect you during a thunderstorm:



If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately, such as a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in convertible automobiles.



Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances not necessary for obtaining weather information. Avoid using electrical appliances. Use phones **ONLY** in an emergency.



Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressors.



Do not take a bath or shower. Water is an electrical conductor.

### **If caught outdoors and no shelter is nearby:**



If lightning is occurring and a shelter is not available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep the windows up.



If no automobile is available, find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles. Be alert to the possibility of flash flooding.



If you are in the woods, take shelter under short trees or bushes.



If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground.



If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately.



Stay away from open outdoor spaces.

## Thunderstorm/Lightning Facts

Thunderstorms are a common spring and summer occurrence throughout Ohio. Many Ohioans may not realize that thunderstorm winds and lightning kill more people each year than tornadoes.



Over a 30-year time period, lightning has caused approximately 83 deaths in the United States each year.



All thunderstorms produce lightning. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.



In any given thunderstorm, approximately two-thirds of the lightning occurs from cloud-to-cloud and about one-third from cloud-to-ground.



Lightning results from the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between positively and negatively charged areas. The action of rising and descending air within a thunderstorm separates positive and negative charges.



Ohio experiences thunderstorm activity an average of 30 to 50 days annually.



The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts 30 minutes.



Nearly 1,800 thunderstorms occur at any moment around the world. That's 16 million storms per year.



Of the estimated 100,000 thunderstorms that occur each year in the United States, only about 10% are classified severe.



Severe thunderstorms can produce damaging winds as strong as the winds in a weak tornado and can be life threatening.



A severe thunderstorm can produce hail that is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter or larger, winds of 58 miles per hour or higher, or tornadoes.



Large hail causes nearly \$1 billion in damage to property and crops annually.



The costliest U.S. hailstorm occurred in Denver, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990. Total hail damage was estimated at \$625 million.



Lightning strikes the earth 100 times each second.