

# THUNDERSTORM SAFETY TIPS



The first rule for any emergency preparation is to have a family disaster plan and an emergency kit. Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.

Each home should have a [disaster kit](#) for any emergency, including:

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person (one gallon per day), and a similar supply for pets.
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries. Hand-crank radios can also be used in times of emergency. **NEVER** use candles!
- Special items for infants, the elderly, and disabled family members.

### **If a storm is predicted:**

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for dark clouds, flashes of light, or increasing wind.
- Listen for the sound of thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- Listen to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for updated weather forecasts.

### **For an approaching storm:**

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances.
- Avoid taking a bath or shower, or running water for any other purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor.

### **If you're caught outside:**

- Go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- Squat low to the ground. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible.
- Do not lie flat on the ground--this will make you a larger target!

### **If someone is injured or struck by lightning:**

- People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Call for help. Get someone to call 9-1-1.
- The injured person has received an electrical shock and may be burned, both where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Check for burns. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight.
- Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, look and care for other possible injuries.