



**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS**  
**DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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**Lightning Safety Awareness Week**  
**June 23-29, 2013**  
**“When Thunder Roars...Go Indoors!”**

(MADISON) – Every year, lightning kills more than 50 Americans and injures hundreds of others leaving them with lifelong pain and in some cases permanent neurological disabilities. Here in Wisconsin, 25 people have been killed and 208 injured as a result of lightning since 1982. You can protect yourself and your family by knowing these simple lightning safety facts and tips:

- If you hear thunder, you are in danger. Don't be fooled by blue skies. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. Don't wait, seek shelter immediately. Remember: When Thunder Roars...Go Indoors!
- A fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing offers the best protection. Sheds, picnic shelters and covered porches DO NOT protect you from lightning.
- If a building is not available get into a hard-topped metal vehicle and close all the windows.
- Stay inside a safe building or vehicle for at least 30 minutes after you hear the last clap of thunder.
- Don't use a corded phone except in an emergency. Cordless and cell phones are safe to use.
- Keep away from electrical equipment and wiring.
- Because water pipes conduct electricity, don't take a bath or shower or use other plumbing during a storm.
- Stay away from isolated tall trees, towers or utility poles. Lightning tends to strike taller object in an area.
- Get an Emergency Weather Radio. It will broadcast the latest forecast for thunderstorms. Remember, any thunderstorm, whether it is severe or not, can produce deadly lightning.

Act fast if someone is struck by lightning:

- Lightning victims don't carry an electric charge and are safe to touch and need urgent medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death.
- Call 911 immediately.
- Give CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if one is available.
- If possible, move the victim to a safer place. Lightning can strike twice. Don't be a victim.

Lightning Facts:

- Lightning occurs in all thunderstorms; each year lightning strikes the United States 25 million times.
- Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially tall isolated objects.
- Most lightning victims are in open areas or near a tree.
- The energy from one lightning flash could light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months.
- The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000°F—five times hotter than the surface of the sun!
- The rapid heating and cooling of the air near the lightning channel causes a shock wave which results in thunder.

Lightning Myths:

- Myth: Rubber tires on a car protect you from lightning by insulating you from the ground.
  - Fact: The metal roof and sides protect you, NOT the rubber tires. When lightning strikes a vehicle it goes through the metal frame into the ground. Don't lean on the vehicle doors during a thunderstorm.
- Myth: If trapped outside and lightning is about to strike you should lie flat on the ground.
  - Fact: Lying flat increases your chance of being hit by a ground current. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm keep moving toward a safe shelter.
- Myth: If thunderstorms threaten while you are outside playing a game it is OK to finish before seeking shelter.
  - Fact: Many lightning casualties occur because people do not seek shelter soon enough. No game is worth death or lifelong injuries. Seek shelter immediately if you hear thunder. Adults are responsible for the safety of children.

For additional information about lightning safety and awareness go to <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also contact your local public health department, county emergency management director or the National Weather Service.

# Lightning Events 1982 - 2012

# Events/ # Deaths/ # Injuries  
(Events causing damage)

