



Governor John R. Kasich

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Emergency Management Association of Ohio
Hands On, Central Ohio / Ohio Citizen Corps
National Weather Service
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Transportation
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Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 19-25
Number of Lightning-Strike Fatalities Dropping – Staying Indoors is Key to Safety

COLUMBUS, OH – In the annual coordinated effort with the National Weather Service and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, Governor John R. Kasich recognizes June 19-25, 2011 as Lightning Safety Awareness Week, and encourages all Ohioans to practice lightning and severe weather safety and preparedness during this week and throughout the summer.

According to the National Weather Service, the number of annual lightning-strike fatalities is decreasing. Twenty-nine people died of lightning strikes in 2010, including one Ohioan. In 2009, 34 people died.

This year, one person has died from a lightning strike. On May 23, a 31-year-old Missouri police officer was struck while performing search and rescue efforts after a massive tornado destroyed the town of Joplin, Mo. He was one of a dozen emergency responders from Kansas City who volunteered to help with recovery efforts. The tornado killed more than 130 people.

Ohio averages 30-50 days of thunderstorm activity annually. But this year, with the eastern half of the nation experiencing extreme severe storms, flooding and tornadoes, Ohio has already exceeded record rainfall for the months of March, April and May.

Summertime is the peak season for thunder and lightning storms. Lightning Safety Awareness Week is conducted each year during the last full week of June – the beginning of summer. The purpose of the week is to help safeguard people from the hazards of lightning and to lower deaths and injuries caused by lightning strikes.

Review your severe weather safety plan. Check the items in your disaster supply kit. Conduct tornado and fire drills. Know where to go and what to do during severe storms. Check weather forecasts daily and plan outdoor activities accordingly. Just remember: ***When thunder roars, go indoors.***

Watch for developing thunderstorms – Thunderstorms are most likely to develop on spring or summer days, but can also occur at night and any time of the year. Listen to weather reports on local radio or television stations. Invest in a NOAA Weather Radio that will sound an alert and broadcast watches and warnings when hazardous weather is in or near your area.

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“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

Seek shelter before an approaching thunderstorm – Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from where it's raining. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek shelter immediately.

Minimize the risk of being struck during outdoor activities – Most lightning strikes occur during the summer when people are participating in outdoor water or sporting events. At the first clap of thunder, stop outdoor activities and try to find indoor shelter immediately. If swimming, boating or fishing, get out and away from the water as quickly as possible. Shelter in a house or other substantial building offers the best protection.

Things to avoid while indoors – While inside during a thunderstorm, do not use land lines or corded telephones. Do not use computers or other electrical equipment that will put you in direct contact with electricity. Stay away from pools, bathtubs, showers and other plumbing. Wait 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder before going outside again.

By knowing what to do during severe weather, you can greatly increase your safety and the safety of those around you.

For additional information on lightning safety, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov or the National Weather Service site: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

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