



American Red Cross  
National Weather Service  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Insurance

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Emergency Management Agency  
Emergency Management Association of Ohio  
Ohio Insurance Institute  
Ohio News Network  
Division of the State Fire Marshal

**Bob Taft, Governor of Ohio**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS JUNE 18-24 "OHIO LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK"**

*Summer is Peak Season for One of the Nation's Deadliest Weather Phenomena*

**COLUMBUS, OH** – To help promote effective emergency preparedness for lightning and severe thunderstorms, Governor Bob Taft announced June 18-24, 2006 as "Lightning Safety Awareness Week." The governor's resolution comes in conjunction with the National Weather Service's proclamation of National Lightning Safety Awareness Week.

The purpose of Lightning Safety Awareness Week is to help safeguard people from the hazards of lightning and to lower deaths and injuries due to lightning strikes. According to the National Weather Service, on average 67 people in the United States are killed annually by lightning, which is more than the national average of people killed by tornadoes and hurricanes.

"Educating the public on how to protect their lives, property and the lives of others on the dangers associated with thunder and lightning storms is imperative," said Taft. "I am pleased with the work of the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness and its commitment in helping Ohioans understand the dangers of lightning and other natural hazards that affect our state."

The committee encourages Ohioans to learn and practice these important lightning facts and safety tips:

- **Watch for Developing Thunderstorm.** Especially during summer months, pay attention to weather conditions; watch for developing thunderstorms. On a sunny day, as the sun heats the air, pockets of warmer air start to rise in the atmosphere. When the warmer air reaches a certain level, towering cumulus clouds can develop, which could be one of the first indications of a developing thunderstorm.
- **If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of lightning.** Seek safe shelter immediately. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain area in a thunderstorm. If the sky looks threatening, take shelter before hearing thunder.
- **Minimize the risk of being struck by lightning while participating in outdoor activities.** Many people participate in outdoor recreational activities during the summer. Those involved in outdoor activities need to take appropriate actions and seek shelter in a timely manner when thunderstorms approach.

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"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

[www.ema.ohio.gov/Weather.htm](http://www.ema.ohio.gov/Weather.htm)

- **Things to Avoid While Sheltering Indoors:** People should stay away from windows and doors and avoid contact with anything that conducts electricity, which include using telephones (corded and cordless) during storms. Cellular telephones are the safest to use during thunderstorms. Avoid water. Do not shower, bathe or wash dishes during storms. Water is an electrical conductor.
- **Things to Avoid While Outdoors:** If a thunderstorm is imminent, stop or avoid outdoor water activities such as boating, swimming and fishing. If you are already in water, exit as quickly and as safely as possible. Never use a tree for shelter and avoid using solitary trees, open areas or hilltops as shelters. Stay away from all metallic objects such as fences, power lines, poles, etc. If you feel a tingling sensation or if your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Immediately assume the “Lightning Safety Position” by crouching down and covering your ears. DO NOT lie down or place your hands on the ground.
- **Helping a Lightning Strike Victim.** If a person is struck by lightning, medical care is usually needed immediately. Cardiac arrest and irregularities, burns and nerve damage are typical life-threatening injuries when a person is struck. Knowing first aid measures, which include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), can help lightning-strike victims survive. American Red Cross chapters and local fire departments often offer first aid and CPR classes.
- **Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV station** to receive up-to-date information about severe thunderstorm watches and warnings.

For additional information on lightning safety, visit [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/), and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Web site: [www.ocswa.ohio.gov](http://www.ocswa.ohio.gov).

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