

THUNDERSTORMS

About 10% of the thunderstorms that occur annually in the United States are classified as severe. Even those that are not can still be dangerous. Lightning in particular is a threat, though it may seem that a thunderstorm is miles away.

Before Thunderstorms Strike

- ✓ Cut down dead trees and clear branches from around your house.
- ✓ Secure loose outdoor objects such as patio furniture.
- ✓ Shutter the windows and secure the doors.

During a Thunderstorm

- ✓ Get or stay inside if, after seeing lightning you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder.
- ✓ Do not shower or bathe.
- ✓ Do not use a corded telephone, except in an emergency. Cell phones and cordless phones are OK to use during a storm.
- ✓ Unplug electronics and turn off air conditioners.
- ✓ If outside, take shelter.
- ✓ If outside in an open area, move to a low spot such as a ravine or valley-but beware of flash flooding.
- ✓ Never stand under a tall, isolated tree, on a hilltop, in an open field, or near open water.
- ✓ Stay away from metal equipment and apparatus such as fences, tractors, pipes and bicycles.
- ✓ If swimming, get out of the water immediately and take shelter.

How close is the Storm?

To determine how close a thunderstorm is to you, count the seconds between the lighting flash and the next rumble of thunder. Divide that number by five. The answer is the number of miles away the storm is.

If You're about to Be Struck

- Feeling your hair stand on end means lightning is about to strike nearby. Make yourself into a small target.
- Squat down on the balls of your feet-do not lie flat on the ground.
- Place your hands over your ears and tuck your head between your knees.

Did You Know

On average, the United States gets 100,000 thunderstorms every year.

Terms to Know

Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Severe thunderstorms are likely to occur.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Severe thunderstorms have been spotted, and people in the path of the storm are in danger.