



LIGHTNING FACT SHEET



Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 19 – 25, 2011

- The National Weather Service (NWS) offices in Illinois have once again partnered with the **Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)** to emphasize the dangers of lightning.

People that spend time outdoors need to be aware that if a thunderstorm is nearby, a lightning strike can cause death or serious injury. This can occur whether you are participating in or viewing a sporting event, doing yard work, or relaxing in a lawn chair.

- There are an estimated **25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes each year in the United States**, nearly 750,000 of which occur in Illinois alone.
- Each year, **55 people are killed by lightning in the United States on average**.
- **Since 1960, 100 people have been killed by lightning in Illinois**.
- **In 2010, there were 29 confirmed deaths and about 200 reported injuries due to lightning in the United States**.
- About **67% of lightning fatalities and injuries occur outdoors at recreation events (baseball games, soccer games, track meets, lakes, and on golf courses), and under or near trees**.
- Lightning results in about \$5 billion of economic impact in the U.S. each year, and is one of the leading causes of forest fires. **In 2010, fires started by lightning strikes caused more than \$65 Million in damage to homes in the United States, about \$1.4 Million of which was reported in Illinois**.
- **Lightning is most likely to happen in the spring and summer months, in the late afternoon or evening – but it CAN HAPPEN at any time. NO place outdoors is safe when a thunderstorm is near!**
- **Lightning Safety is a two-step process:**
 - 1.) If you hear thunder, OR you see a lightning bolt, **IMMEDIATELY:**
 - Take shelter in a sturdy building with the windows and doors shut **OR**
 - Seek shelter in an enclosed, hard-topped vehicle with the windows closed.
 - 2.) Do not go back outdoors for at least 30 minutes **AFTER** the last rumble of thunder.
- **More information** can be found on the Web at:

www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/?n=lightning OR www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov