



National Weather Service

Building a Weather-Ready Nation

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The Focus is on Lightning Safety during the Week of June 23-29

Summer is time for backyard barbeques, trips to the beach and lots of outdoor fun, but it's also a time when thunderstorms become more frequent. In a typical year, there are over half a million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes in the state of Kentucky. [Since 2000, there have been 12 deaths attributed to lightning across the state, and, on average, lightning kills over 50 people in the U.S. each year.](#) Although the average annual number of lightning deaths in recent years has dropped, the National Weather Service and its lightning safety partners believe that's still too many and urge the public, "*When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!*"

Deaths are only part of the lightning story. Only about 10% of those struck are killed, but many of the survivors suffer devastating life-long injuries. These injuries are primarily neurological, with a wide range of symptoms, and are very difficult to diagnose.

The National Weather Service has set aside the week of June 23rd through 29th as Lightning Safety Awareness Week. This week provides a good opportunity to learn about lightning safety.

"Public education is the key," said Tony Edwards, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Jackson, KY. "Most lightning related deaths and injuries can be easily avoided if people just realize one thing: if you can hear thunder, even if it sounds distant, then you are close enough to that storm to be struck by lightning." In fact, [lightning flashes have been documented to travel more than 25 miles away from the thunderstorm cloud!](#)

To avoid being struck by lightning, the National Weather Service recommends that you:

- Get into a fully enclosed building or hardtop vehicle at the first rumble of thunder;
- Stay indoors for 30 minutes after the last thunder clap;
- Monitor the weather forecast when you're planning to be outdoors;
- Have a plan for getting to safety in case a thunderstorm moves in;
- Do not use a corded phone during a thunderstorm; cell phones are safe to use;
- Keep away from plumbing, electrical equipment and wiring during a thunderstorm.

The National Weather Service has created a community-based volunteer awareness program to increase awareness about the danger of lightning at outdoor venues, like local parks, ball fields, golf courses and swimming pools. [Toolkits](#) are available to help reduce the risk of lightning related threats. Those who complete the process will be recognized for their proactive efforts in lightning safety.

For more information, including venue toolkits, media resources, statistics, and resources for kids, please go to www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

