

## PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT

Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

...2008 Severe Weather Awareness Week for Nebraska...

Today marks the fourth day of Severe Weather Awareness Week for the state of Nebraska, which continues through Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Severe Weather Awareness Week provides the National Weather Service an opportunity to test communication systems and to get potentially lifesaving information out to the public. Now is the time for people to review their safety plans and be prepared for severe weather season.

The topic for today is lightning.

Lightning is one of the more dangerous aspects of thunderstorms, and is sometimes not taken as seriously as others. All thunderstorms contain lightning, and if you are close enough to hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Lightning strikes 10 to 15 miles away from a thunderstorm are possible, so seek shelter if a storm approaches.

If you are outside and a thunderstorm threatens, get into a sturdy building or hard topped vehicle. Do not stand near open doors, windows, or metal pipes. Do not use corded telephones or electrical appliances, do not take a shower, and do not do laundry or dishes, until the storm is over. Terminate any outdoor activities and seek shelter immediately.

If you are outside and no building or vehicle is nearby, stay away from isolated trees or utility poles. Get off of tractors or other metal farm equipment. Get out of and away from open water. Stay away from wire fences, clotheslines, or other metal objects.

If you feel your hair starting to stand on end, lightning may be about to strike you. If no shelter is available, and only as a very last resort, crouch down on your feet and get as close to the ground as possible. Do not lie flat on the ground, as this presents a larger area for lightning to strike. Remember, a sturdy building or hard topped vehicle is always the best choice for shelter when a thunderstorm approaches.

When thunderstorms are in the area, remember the 30-30 safety rule. Count the seconds between the time you see a lightning strike and hear thunder. If that time is less than 30 seconds, you should already be in a safe location or quickly heading to shelter. You may go outside and resume activities after 30 minutes have passed since you last heard thunder.

Anytime the threat for severe weather exists, stay updated on the latest weather information by going to the National Weather Service Website, <http://www.weather.gov>, or by tuning in to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, or your local television and radio station. Make sure to watch for signs for approaching storms, such as darkening skies, increasing winds, flashes of lightning, and thunder.

More information about Severe Weather Awareness Week can be found at:

<http://www.weather.gov/hastings>.