

Thunderstorms

Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings

A *severe thunderstorm watch* is issued by the National Weather Service when the weather conditions are such that a severe thunderstorm (damaging winds 58 miles per hour or more, or hail three-fourths of an inch in diameter or greater) is likely to develop. This is the time to locate a safe place in the home and tell family members to watch the sky and listen to the radio or television for more information.

A *severe thunderstorm warning* is issued when a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. At this point, the danger is very serious and everyone should go to a safe place, turn on a battery-operated radio or television, and wait for the "all clear" by the authorities.

If Indoors:

Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture that could blow away or cause damage or injury. Take light objects inside.

Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.

Listen to a battery operated NOAA weather radio or television for the latest storm information.

Do not handle any electrical equipment or telephones because lightning could follow the wire. Television sets are particularly dangerous at this time.

Avoid bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity.



If Outdoors:

Attempt to get into a building or car.

If no structure is available, get to an open space and squat low to the ground as quickly as possible. (If in the woods, find an area protected by low clump of trees--never stand underneath a single large tree in the open.) Be aware of the potential for flooding in low-lying areas.

Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees, fences, telephone lines, or power lines.

Stay away from natural lightning rods such as golf clubs, tractors, fishing rods, bicycles, or camping equipment.

Stay from rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water.

If you are isolated in a level field or prairie and you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike), bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. A position with feet together and crouching while removing all metal objects is recommended. Do not lie flat on the ground.

If In A Car:

Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road away from any trees that could fall on the vehicle.

Stay in the car and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rains subside.

Avoid flooded roadways.



Excerpted from Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency