

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Protection
from Lightning*

All of us who reside in Mississippi, as well as most any place in the south, lives under the threat of thunder and lightning.

Facts of Lightning

- ✓ Lightning causes an average of 80 fatalities and 300 injuries each year.
- ✓ Lightning occurs in all thunderstorms and strikes the earth 20 million times each year.
- ✓ The energy from one flash of lightning could light up a 100 watt bulb for 3 months.
- ✓ Most lightning fatalities occur during the summer months when folks are outdoors during the afternoon and evening.
- ✓ Lightning can occur from cloud to cloud, within a cloud, cloud to ground, or cloud to air.
- ✓ The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000 F (hotter than the surface of the earth)
- ✓ The rapid heating and cooling of the air near a lightning channel causes a shock wave that results in thunder.

Often asked question- How Far Away is a Thunderstorm?

- Count the number of seconds between a flash of lightning and the next clap of thunder.
- Divide the number by 5 to determine the distance in miles.

Tips for Preparation before Lightning & Severe Weather

- Develop an emergency plan for you and your family that includes work, home, school, and when you're outdoors.
- Identify a safe place to take shelter, prepare a safe room in your home, school, or workplace.
- Look on the FEMA site for help in arranging for a safe room:
www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_saferoom.shtm
- Once you have a plan, set up times to discuss and orient the plan with your family and set periodic times to refresh the family with the points of the plan.
- The National Weather Service issues weather bulletins by county or parish, so it is important that you be familiar with the media location to stay abreast of inclement weather situations.
- A map is very useful so that you can follow the weather patterns by it.
- Having a NOAA weather radio and battery backup is cheap insurance for staying on top of weather issues. The NOAA internet is also good for keeping up with the weather at:
www.nws.noaa.gov/organization.html

Lightning Safety Rules-

- Postpone all outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. This is the best and soundest way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees or in convertible automobiles.
- Stay away from tall objects such as towers, utility poles, fences, and power lines.
- If lightning is occurring and a sturdy shelter isn't available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep the windows up. Avoid touching any metal.
- Utility lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances that are not necessary for obtaining weather information. Avoid using the telephone or any electric appliances. Use the phones only in an emergency.
- Do not take a shower or bath during lightning or a thunder storm.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- As thunder gets louder and in closer intervals, this is a good sign that lightning activity is approaching, increasing the risk for lightning injury or death.

Tips for a Victim Struck by Lightning-

- ✓ Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention.
- ✓ Cardiac arrests is the immediate cause of death for those who die.
- ✓ Some deaths can be saved if the victim receives the proper first aid.
- ✓ Call for Help - Call 9-1-1 or the local ambulance service.
- ✓ Give first aid - Do not delay CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) if one is available.
- ✓ If possible - move the victim to a safer place. Lightning can strike twice. Don't become a victim.

LIGHTNING RULE -

Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the first clap of thunder.

INCIDENTS OF FATALITIES BY LIGHTNING-

Boating	Standing under a tree	Riding a horse
Swimming	Riding on a lawnmower	Playing soccer
Golfing	Talking on a telephone	Fishing in a boat
Bike Riding	Loading a truck	Mountain climbing

**YOUR LIFE DIDN'T ORIGINATE WITH
LIGHTNING STRIKES
DON'T LET IT END WITH IT !!!**

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Excerpts: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsake
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>

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