

LIGHTNING

All thunderstorms contain lightning, and although not considered a requirement for a severe thunderstorm, it is very dangerous. From 1995 to 2010 in Alabama, approximately 145 injuries and 25 deaths have been attributed to this underrated killer. Lightning will follow a path of least resistance, typically striking the tallest object in a given area. This could be you, a power pole, or an isolated tree in an open field. Lightning can also travel great distances, striking as far away as 10 miles from the parent thunderstorm. You could be struck well before or after the other effects of a thunderstorm pass your area. You could be struck even if it does not rain!

Courtesy of Bill Wall
Jefferson County, May 15, 2009



Anyone outdoors is particularly vulnerable to lightning. Each person, group or school involved in outdoor activities should have a plan that can be activated quickly when lightning threatens. You should take shelter in a sturdy, enclosed building. Sheds, dugouts, tents and gazebos are not safe. Avoid open spaces, isolated objects, and high ground. Avoid metallic objects such as fences, pipes, power poles, and bikes. Take cover in a hard top automobile, keeping windows up and doors closed. Get out of boats and away from bodies of water.

Once indoors, stay away from windows, doors, and off porches. Avoid contact with any plumbing and electrical items, including TVs and computers. Do not use corded phones, except for emergencies. Do not lie on concrete floors or lean against concrete walls. Remember to bring pets indoors.

Courtesy of Genki Kino
Shelby County, June 16, 2011



Remember, if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to a storm to be struck by lightning. For more information on lightning safety, visit www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

***When Thunder Roars,
Go Indoors!***