



Illinois 4-H Safe

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illinois 4-H Safe is intended primarily for 4-H staff and volunteers

LIGHTNING AND STORM SAFETY

Instability in the atmosphere allows air to rise, the farther air rises, the greater the potential for thunderstorm development. Lightning kills an average of 49 people each year in the U.S. and injures hundreds more. Some survivors suffer lifelong neurological damage. Approximately 50 percent of lightning deaths occurred outside in open areas and about 16 percent of these happened when people stood under trees hit by lightning. Lightning is a dangerous threat to people outdoors if they are in proximity to the storm. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from the storm.

What is the difference between a storm watch and a storm warning? A **watch** means conditions are favorable for a storm to develop, be aware and "watch." A **warning** means a storm is occurring; seek shelter immediately.

Precautions to help prevent the potential for being struck or seriously injured by lightning

1. If you are within hearing distance of thunder, you are within striking distance.
2. If you see lightning and hear thunder in less than 30 seconds, the thunderstorm is within six miles of you and should be considered dangerous.
3. When lightning threat becomes significant, seek shelter immediately.
4. Sheltering from lightning includes returning to a vehicle with windows closed, get off ridges or hill tops, and get inside buildings or facilities in an interior room and away from windows.
 1. Tents offer no protection from lightning so camp in valleys or other low areas.
 2. Unplug and stay away from appliances, computers, radios, and television sets.
 3. Never seek shelter under an isolated tree in an open area.
5. Stay away from water or wet items; avoid contact with metal objects such as fences, poles, electrical wires including overhead utility lines, machinery, and power tools as these will conduct electricity if electrified.
6. It is not safe to take refuge from lightning beneath canopies or small picnic or rain shelters.
7. If you are caught in the open during a thunderstorm, crouch down and cover your ears. If possible, crouch down in a nearby low spot. If in a group, spread out to avoid the current traveling between group members.
8. If someone is struck by lightning, *immediately call 911*. Know how to direct emergency responders to the injured person's location.
9. If the victim of a lightning strike is unconscious, check their airway. As necessary, start CPR and apply other first aid measures.
10. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activities.

Any incidents need to be reported to the 4-H member's parent/guardian and 4-H staff.



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