

Drive
SAFE

Work
SAFE

Live
SAFE

THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms are intense local storms spreading out over an average area of 20 miles and reaching up to 10 miles in height. They happen in all 50 states and are always accompanied by lightning.

What you can do to prepare:

- Create a family emergency plan
 - Designate a place in your home where your family should gather during a thunderstorm. This place should be free of windows, glass doors or skylights.
 - Check with your local city hall or township to learn how you would be notified of a thunderstorm watch or warning. If the possibility of a thunderstorm exists, the best gathering place is usually the basement. If you are in a building without a basement choose a center hallway, bathroom or closet, preferably on the lowest floor. In any case, make sure this location is clutter free.
 - Show children how to squat low to the ground (hands on their knees and their head between their knees) forming the smallest lightning target possible in case they are caught outside during a thunderstorm.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit
 - Include a first aid kit and basic medications, battery-powered flashlight and radio, extra batteries, canned food and a can opener, bottled water, work gloves and sturdy shoes, and written instructions on how to turn off your home's utilities.
- Learn First Aid and CPR
 - Check with the Minnesota Safety Council or your local community center or Red Cross Chapter for course offerings.

As a storm approaches:

- Stay tuned for storm information
 - Listen to your local TV and radio stations for up-to-date storm information.
- Be aware of the possibility of lightning
 - Watch for darkening skies, increased wind and flashes of light.
 - Listen for thunder. If you can hear thunder, the storm is close enough that you could be struck by lightning. Get to a safe shelter immediately!
- Avoid using your land line phone and unplug appliances
 - These items may conduct electricity.
- Turn off the air conditioner
 - Power surges from lightning can overload your compressor resulting in costly damage.
- Close all window shades and blinds
 - This can help prevent glass from shattering inwards.
- Avoid running the water for any purpose



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL

Making Minnesota a Safer Place to Live
mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org

minnesotasafetycouncil.org © Minnesota Safety Council, Inc.

Drive
SAFE

Work
SAFE

Live
SAFE

If caught outdoors

- Get to the safest spot possible
 - Choose a low-lying open place away from poles, metal objects and trees.
 - If you are in the woods, find shelter under shorter trees.
 - If swimming or boating, get to land and find shelter immediately.
- Be a small target
 - Squat low to the ground with your hands on your knees and your head between your knees.
 - Do not lie flat on the ground-you actually become a bigger target.

After a storm passes:

- Stay away from storm-damaged areas
 - Especially avoid downed power lines.
- Listen to the radio for instructions and information.

If lightning strikes someone

- Call 911 immediately
- Give First Aid
 - Contrary to popular belief, people struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge.
 - If the victim has received an electrical shock, there may be two areas of burn (one where the electricity entered the body and one where it exited the body), so be sure to check for burns in both areas.

Acknowledgments:

American Red Cross



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL

Making Minnesota a Safer Place to Live
mssc@minnesotasafetycouncil.org

minnesotasafetycouncil.org © Minnesota Safety Council, Inc.