



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

Administrative Services Emergency Management

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When Thunder Roars and Lightning Strikes, Go Indoors

“June 24-30, 2007, has been designated National Lightning Safety Awareness Week for the purpose of educating and informing people about the dangers of lightning. Lightning is one of the nation’s deadliest weather phenomena. People can be directly hit by lightning and/or lightning can strike the ground near where a person is standing,” stated Ben Schliesman, Director, Kenosha County Emergency Management/Homeland Security. “In the US approximately 400 people each year are struck by lightning causing about 80 deaths and 5 billion dollars in economic impact. Between 1982 and 2006, Kenosha County experienced 14 lightning events, causing 1 death, 5 injuries and millions of dollars in damages.”

*“Per the National Weather Service, lightning accompanies every thunderstorm; there is an average of 100,000 thunderstorms in the US every year with an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes,” said Schliesman. “One ground strike can generate between 100 million and one billion volts of electricity or enough to keep a 100-watt bulb lit for three months.”

*“If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning,” stated Schliesman. “To protect yourself against a lightning strike you should purchase a NOAA All Hazard Weather Radio to keep aware of changing weather conditions, approaching storms and any other natural or man-made disasters. Kenosha County’s sirens are outdoor warning sirens and are meant to be heard outdoors, so its’ important to protect your family and workplace by getting a NOAA All Hazard Weather Radio.”

*When a Storm approaches you should:

- Find shelter in a building or car; keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity so unplug appliances.
- Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances.
- Avoid taking a bath or shower or running water for any other purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner; power surges from lightning can overload the compressor, resulting in a costly repair job.

- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

*If you are struck by lightning or are in the vicinity of an area where lightning has struck the ground, you may be affected by lightning in the following ways: memory loss, attention deficit, sleep disorder, numbness, dizziness, stiffness in joints, irritability, fatigue, weakness, muscle spasms, depression, heart attack, heart failure or even death, do to the electrical shock. Immediately call 911 and seek medical help; 90% of lightning victims survive their encounter with lightning but immediate medical treatment is necessary.

For more information on Lightning, log onto the National Weather Service Lightning Safety website at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>

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*National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration – National Weather Service