

MAFES Dawg Tracks



March 26, 2007 Safety Tips: Lightning/Thunderstorm Activities



Living in the South and especially in Mississippi, if you don't like the weather, just "hang loose." It will change shortly.

Unfortunately, some of these changes that we don't enjoy involve thunder and lightning. Weather patterns and changes have been written about and discussed several times over the past years. However, we can never be too safe or too cognizant of our weather and how it can affect us, if we aren't careful.

BEFORE LIGHTNING STRIKES:

Keep an eye on the sky. Look for dark skies, flashes of light, increasing wind, and the sound of thunder.

If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Seek shelter immediately!

- Listen to a NOAA weather radio, commercial radio, or television for the latest weather forecast.

WHEN A STORM APPROACHES:

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep the car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes or posts are excellent conductors. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. Leaving electrical appliances on doesn't increase the chances of your home being struck by lightning,
- Avoid taking a bath or shower or running the faucets for any reason or purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from the lightning can cause major repair costs.
- Draw your Venetian blinds shut. With the windows covered, if you should experience flying glass or other objects, the blinds can help to break the blast or speed of the objects.

IF YOU ARE CAUGHT OUTSIDE:

- If you are caught outside, take cover under the shorter wooded trees.
- If you are on the water, fishing, or pleasure boating, get to land by the shortest route possible. Find shelter immediately.

PROTECTING YOURSELF OUTSIDE:

- Get to low-lying areas, in ditches, ground depressions, away from utility poles, trees, or metal objects. Check the low-lying areas to be sure that they aren't subject to flooding.
- Be as small a target as possible. Squat low to the ground, with your hands on your knees and your head between them. You need to make yourself the smallest target as possible.

AFTER THE STORM PASSES:

- Stay away from storm damaged areas.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.

IF SOMEONE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTING:

- People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Call for help. Get someone to dial 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number.
- The injured person has received an electrical shock and may be burned, both where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Check for burns in both places. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight.
- Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, look and care for other possible injuries. Learn first aid and CPR by taking a Red Cross first aid and CPR course. The local Red Cross can arrange classes and fees and there are other certified groups that do the first aid/CPR courses as well.

When thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, this isn't the time to be a hero. I lost a friend on Pickwick Lake about 25 years ago. He was bass fishing in clear weather, but partly cloudy.. Lightning struck the motor and jumped over to him. My other friend, in the front of the boat witnessed it and was stung pretty good himself.

WE MUST RESPECT THE WEATHER!!!

**SAFETY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY
ACCIDENT!**
BE ALERT — BE AWARE — BE ALIVE