

# Thunderstorms & Lightning

In the United States, lightning kills 300 people and injures 80 on average, each year. All thunderstorms produce lightning and all have the potential for danger. Those dangers can include tornadoes, strong winds, hail, wildfires and flash flooding, which is responsible for more fatalities than any other thunderstorm-related hazard.

Lightning's risk to individuals and property is increased because of its unpredictability, which emphasizes the importance of preparedness. It often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the afternoon and evening.

## Step 1: Get a Kit

Get an [Emergency Supply Kit](#), which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries.

## Step 2: Make a Plan

### Prepare Your Family

- Make a [Family Emergency Plan](#).
- Inform babysitters and caregivers of your plan.
- Take a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class from your local [Citizen Corps chapter](#). Keep your training current.
- Remember the **30/30 Lightning Safety Rule**: Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

## Step 3: Be Informed

### Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a thunderstorm hazard

- A **thunderstorm watch** means there is a possibility of a thunderstorm in your area.
- A **thunderstorm warning** means a thunderstorm is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to take shelter, do so immediately.

### Prepare Your Home

- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.
- Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency by visiting: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/emergency/index.html>

### Listen to Local Officials

Learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your [state and local government](#). In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.

For further information on how to plan and prepare for thunderstorms and lightning as well as what to do during and after a thunderstorm, visit: [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#), [NOAA Watch](#), or [American Red Cross](#).