June 23, 2014

**Lightning Safety Awareness Week: June 23-28, 2014**

“When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors” is a good phrase to remember this summer while you’re enjoying outdoor activities. The catchy phrase is intended to remind people that hearing thunder means you’re close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), the National Weather Service (NWS) and local emergency management agencies are joining forces to promote lightning safety during Lightning Safety Awareness Week June 23-28, 2014.

“More than 70 percent of lightning strike deaths occur during June, July, and August when people are enjoying more outdoor activities,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “Don’t take a chance with lightning. If you hear thunder, that’s your cue to take shelter immediately.” Monken said some people still rely on outdated lightning safety rules, such as taking shelter only if you can’t count to 30 between seeing the lightning strike and hearing thunder. People are now urged to take shelter in a substantial building or hard-topped car as soon as they hear thunder.

According to the NWS, on average, around 50 people are killed and 1,000 people injured by lightning in the U.S. each year. A majority of victims were either outdoors in an open area or taking part in an activity near the water, such as fishing, boating, or swimming.

IEMA and the NWS offer the following tips for staying safe when thunderstorms approach:

**Outdoor Lightning Safety Tips:**
- No place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to a safe shelter
- Stay in the safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last clap of thunder

**If There Is No Safe Shelter Anywhere Nearby:**
- Seek lower elevation areas
- Never use a tree for shelter
- Immediately get out and away from pools, lakes, and other bodies of water
- Stay away from all metallic objects (fences, power lines, poles, etc.)
- Do not raise umbrellas or golf clubs above you

People shouldn’t hesitate to help someone who has been struck by lightning since victims do not carry an electrical charge. The surge of electricity through a lightning victim’s body causes cardiac arrest in most fatalities, so immediate medical attention is critical. If the victim doesn’t have a pulse and isn’t breathing, CPR should be administered immediately.


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