

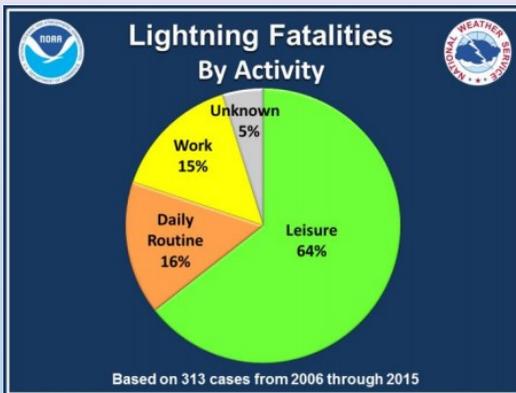


Lightning Safety

Mark your calendars!

[Lightning Safety Awareness Week](#)

June 13-17, 2016



Pennsylvania’s Lightning Risk:

As summertime arrives and outdoor activities increase across the commonwealth, so does the threat for thunderstorms. A thunderstorm by definition contains lightning, which is often unpredictable and *always dangerous*. Lightning can strike 10 miles from the storm! You have a 1 in 12,000 chance of being struck by lightning in you lifetime. *Pennsylvania ranks 9th* in the United States for lightning fatalities from 1959-2013, with *132 lives lost*. However, we’re 26th on the list for lightning frequency. More people are injured or killed by lightning in PA, despite the lower frequency of strikes. The vast majority of lightning deaths occur during outdoor leisure activities, especially around water. Pennsylvania has a wide array of parks and waterways, which many of our residents enjoy throughout the summer. Males dominate the death percentages at 80%. Most lightning deaths occur over the summer months, so let’s refresh with lightning safety and tips.

Lightning Safety:

- Nowhere outdoors is safe from lightning. Seek shelter in an enclosed permanent building or a metal-topped vehicle.
- Seek shelter the moment you hear the first rumble of thunder, and stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble.
- When indoors, avoid using anything with a cord or plumbing attached to it like computers, phones, baths, & sinks.
- Avoid doors and windows, and stay off porches.

Tips if stuck outside:

Do whatever you can to find a sturdy shelter....but if you have no options do the following:

- Get off elevations like hills, ridges or peaks and avoid wide open areas.
- Don’t lie flat on the ground because of electricity passing though it, but crouch as low as possible to it.
- Stay away from tall objects like isolated trees, power poles, or radio towers.
- Stay far from bodies of water like pools and ponds.

Preparedness tips:

Always pay close attention to the forecast and avoid or postpone outdoor plans if thunderstorms are possible. Monitor the weather closely. Have a plan to seek shelter with all outdoor activities. Don’t forget to bring your pets indoors. Unplug electronics *before* a storm to prevent damage, but never unplug during a storm because of the risk of electrocution. Consider installing lightning rods on your property.

Helping a lightning strike victim:

Ensure you and the victim are both in a safe place. Call 9-1-1 and if trained, immediately begin CPR and use an AED if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. *Lightning strike victims are safe to touch and do not carry an electrical charge!*



**If you can hear thunder,
you can be struck by lightning!**
**Seek shelter and wait 30 minutes after the
last rumble before going outdoors**

Vacation and Travel Safety

As we all know, we do not live in a perfect world and disasters do not only occur when we are home and ready for them. Approximately nine hours a day we spend at work, traveling to or from work, shopping, attending events or in school. The chances of a disaster occurring while the entire family is home are slim, and that is why it is vitally important to be prepared for an emergency no matter where we are, no matter what time of day it is, whether we are home or on vacation.

Think of the last big disaster you may have seen on the news. You may have wondered to yourself, what if I had been there? The possibility of a disaster occurring at your location while you are traveling is distinct, especially when traveling to foreign countries or tropical destinations where the common natural hazard is one that you and your family are not accustomed to preparing for. Below are some tips that may help you be better prepared next time you travel.

Before you leave, ensure you and your family are ready for the trip.



- If you are **driving** to your vacation destination:

- ✓ Pack an emergency roadside kit consisting of jumper cables, flares and white flag, jack, basic repair tools and duck tape, water and food, medications, maps, emergency blankets, towels and coats (at the minimum).
- ✓ Be sure your car is serviced and road ready by checking the tires, oil and getting it serviced.
- ✓ Wear your seat belts at ALL TIMES while moving!

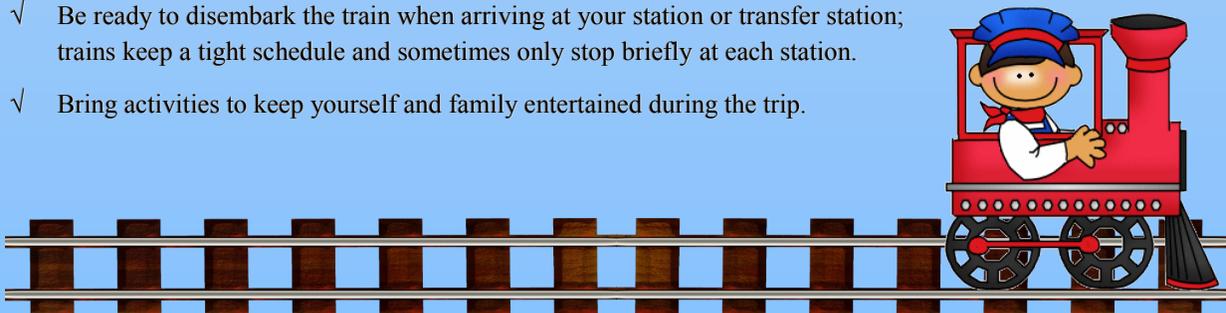
- If **flying**:

- ✓ Attempt to purchase a non-stop ticket since most airline accidents occur during takeoff and landing.
- ✓ Chose larger aircrafts, and pay attention to the preflight briefings and any announcements.
- ✓ Give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the airport early.
- ✓ Follow the TSA rules, including what not to bring on a plane.
- ✓ Do not pack heavy items in overhead bins as these may fall during turbulent weather.



- If you decide to take a **train**:

- ✓ Have a personal emergency kit in your bags that include such items as a small first aid kit, bottled water, snacks, medication, cell phone charger, and a flashlight.
- ✓ Be ready to disembark the train when arriving at your station or transfer station; trains keep a tight schedule and sometimes only stop briefly at each station.
- ✓ Bring activities to keep yourself and family entertained during the trip.



- If you are traveling by **boat**:

- √ Be weather wise and follow pre-departure checklist as this ensures that important boating safety rules and steps are not missed or overlooked.
- √ Make sure more than one person on board knows how to operate the vessel.
- √ Let a contact on shore know your float plan (which could include your destination, length and course of travel, contact information and type of boat).
- √ Ensure you passengers know how to swim and wear their safety gear at ALL TIMES.



Other Helpful Tips

- Research Potential Local Hazards

- √ Go online and research any common potential hazards for your travel destination. Natural and manmade hazards may change drastically by location. Hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires and volcanos are more common in some areas of the world than others.
- √ Prepare yourself to be a tourist, and that means potentially being targeted by thieves and scam artists. Keep your valuables close, and always travel with a buddy.
- √ Read up on your destination at travel.state.gov. Learn about visa requirements, local laws, customs, and medical care in the countries you'll be visiting.

- Locate Local Emergency Locations

- √ Before you even depart your home, be sure you know where the emergency locations are in relation to where you will be staying; such as police stations, and local shelters.
- √ Find out what the [emergency services contact number](#) is for the country your visiting.

- If you are traveling to an area where another language is spoken, attempt to learn some key words to help you communicate important information.

- Identify at least two family reunification points in case something happens while you are not together.



Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: <http://www.pema.pa.gov>
ReadyPA: www.readypa.org
Weather-Ready nation: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/>
Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.ready.gov
American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare>
Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

