

Dept. of Military Affairs: June 22 is Lightning Safety Awareness Day in Wisconsin

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MADISON, Wis. – Thunderstorms can develop quickly during the summer months, creating the threat of lightning strikes for those caught outdoors. Lightning Safety Awareness Day in Wisconsin is Tuesday, June 22, and ReadyWisconsin is urging everyone to learn more about what they can do to stay safe when lightning fills the skies.

“When thunderstorms are in the area, it’s important to remember that outside is the last place you want to be,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “When you spot lightning or hear thunder, head indoors until the danger has passed.”

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, 17 people were struck and killed by lightning in the United States in 2020, while at least two people have been killed by lightning strikes in the U.S. so far this year. The majority of those killed were participating in outdoor recreational activities at the time they were struck. The most recent lightning-related death reported in Wisconsin was in Minocqua in September of 2016.

Even if the sky directly overhead may be clear, lightning can travel several miles from the center of a storm. If thunder can be heard, lightning is close enough to strike nearby. The safest place to seek shelter is inside a sturdy, enclosed structure, such as a house.

Never seek cover under a tree, get out of open areas and stay away from bodies of water, such as lakes or rivers. Even the inside of a car with a hard top is safer than

being out in the open during a thunderstorm. If you are inside a vehicle, avoid touching metal surfaces.

If a person with you is struck by lightning, health officials say you should immediately dial 911 and start performing CPR. Don't be afraid to touch the victim – the human body does not hold an electrical charge.

For more information on lightning safety, visit <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/readywisconsin).