

WisDMA & ReadyWisconsin: Be lightning aware in Summer: Wisconsin Lightning Safety Awareness Day is June 21

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MADISON, Wis. – The summer months bring more people outdoors and they can also bring the threat of dangerous thunderstorms. June 21 is Lightning Safety Awareness Day in Wisconsin and ReadyWisconsin wants you to know how to reduce your lightning risk while still enjoying activities outdoors.

“If you hear thunder outside, you are likely within striking distance of that storm,” said Katie Rousonelos, Wisconsin Emergency Management Public Information Officer. “Too many people are waiting too long to get to a safe spot when thunderstorms approach, and that delayed reaction can lead to lightning deaths or injuries. When thunder roars, go indoors.”

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, 11 people were killed by lightning in the United States in 2021, including a 60-year-old man at a construction site in Menomonie in August of last year. Across the country, an average of 207 lightning injuries occur in a single year.

Even if the sky directly overhead may be clear, lightning can travel several miles from the center of a storm. Lightning can strike from 10 miles away, so if you hear thunder you are in danger. The safest place to seek shelter is inside a sturdy, enclosed structure, such as a house.

If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk:

- Never shelter under an isolated tree. Lightning tends to strike the taller objects in an area.
- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks.
- Immediately get out of and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences.
- Never lie flat on the ground.

If someone is struck by lightning, they may need immediate medical attention. Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to touch. Call 9-1-1 and monitor the victim. Start CPR or use an automated external defibrillator if needed.

For more tips on lightning and severe weather safety, visit <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (<https://facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/-ReadyWisconsin>) and Instagram (<https://instagram.com/ReadyWisconsin>) for safety tips throughout the year.