

Thunderstorm Safety

Thunderstorms are dangerous storms with lightning. A lightning strike can kill you. Thunderstorms often bring powerful winds that can knock down trees, power lines, and mobile homes, intense rainfall that causes flash floods, tornadoes, lightning strikes that can spark fires, as well as damaging hail. But we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home.

What Should You Do Before a Thunderstorm?

Identify a Sturdy Building and Practice Drills

You need to get inside a sturdy building before a thunderstorm hits. A sturdy building is a structure with walls and a foundation. Once you have identified a sturdy building, plan to shelter in the basement or a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level to provide additional protection from high winds. Plan to stay inside until weather forecasts indicate it is safe to leave.

Mobile, manufactured, trailer homes, and recreational vehicles (RVs) are not safe in high winds. If you live in one of these structures, you need to identify a sturdy building nearby that you can get to quickly. Practice drills with everyone in your household, so everyone knows where to go and what to do before a thunderstorm hits.

Plan to Stay Connected

- Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.
- Plan to monitor local weather and news.
- Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.
- In case of a power outage, have a battery-powered radio.
- Understand the types of alerts that you may receive and have a plan to respond:
- A WATCH means **Be Prepared!**
- A WARNING means **Take Action!**
- Learn Emergency Skills

Learn First Aid and CPR.

Utilities may be offline. Be prepared to live without power, gas, and water. Plan for your electrical needs, including cell phones and medical equipment.

Protect Your Home

- Make a list of items outside your home you will need to tie down or put away so that they don't blow away or fly through a window during high winds. When a High Wind, Severe Thunderstorm, or Tornado Watch, is issued, immediately secure these items to avoid damage or injury once the wind starts picking up.
- Secure objects that would be unsafe to bring inside, such as gas grills and propane tanks.
- Trim or remove trees close enough to fall on your home.
- Keep drains, gutters, and downspouts clean.
- Find out if your home is prone to flooding. If it is, consider:
 - Installing a sump pump with battery backup.
 - Elevating the heating system, water heater, and electrical panel.
- Review your home insurance policy. Check to see if you are covered for flood damage.

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!

Pay attention to weather alerts and local information. Postpone outdoor activities if the forecast calls for thunderstorms.

When you hear thunder, seek shelter inside a sturdy building and move to a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass windows and doors. Stay inside until weather forecasts indicate it is safe to leave.

Lightning can be dangerous even when you are inside.

- Avoid using devices connected to electrical outlets.
- Avoid running water. Lightning can travel through plumbing and water lines.
- Remember, no place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm, keep moving toward a safe shelter.
- Sheds, gazebos, dugouts, and bleachers do not protect from lightning and high winds.
- It is dangerous to take shelter under a tree as it is the leading cause of death from lightning strikes. You could also be killed or injured by strong winds blowing down trees and branches.
- Being in a vehicle is safer than being outside; however, if you have time, drive to the closest sturdy building, and take shelter inside.

If you are driving and can't get to a sturdy building, pull off the road and park in a place where falling trees and power lines won't hit you.

Flash flooding happens quickly. Move to higher ground before floodwaters reach you. Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwater.



Turn Around! Don't Drown!

How Can You Stay Safe After a Thunderstorm?

- Avoid fallen power lines, poles, and wires. They can electrocute you. Report them to the utility company immediately.
- Expect power outages.
- Avoid using candles due to the risk of fires. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators, grills, and camp stoves outdoors and away from windows.
- Don't get sick from eating spoiled food. Throw out food that got wet or warm. **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Take Care of Yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Canadian Disaster Relief Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-888-800-6493.

