



# Mississippi Emergency Management Agency News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS: THUNDERSTORMS**

**PEARL** – Thunderstorms and lightning are a regular threat to Mississippians, but there are actions you can take to be better prepared before and during a storm to ensure the safety of yourself and your family.

### **To prepare for a thunderstorm:**

- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage.

### **If a thunderstorm is likely in your area:**

- Postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building or hard top automobile. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cell phones are safe to use.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use your battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio for updates from local officials.

### **Avoid the following during thunderstorms:**

- Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
- Hill tops, open fields, the beach or a boat on the water.
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- Anything metal – tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs and bicycles.

### **What to do if you are in the following places during a thunderstorm:**

- In a forest: Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.
- In an open area: Go to a low place such as a ravine or a valley. Be alert for flash floods.

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- On open water: Get to land and find shelter immediately.
- Anywhere you feel your hair stand on end: This indicates lightning is about to strike. Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact to the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.

Governor Haley Barbour declared Feb. 22- 26 Severe Weather Awareness Week in Mississippi.

For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org).

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