

Thunderstorms & Lightning

Florida is known for its thunderstorms. In fact, Florida has more thunderstorms and lightning strikes each year than anywhere else in the nation. Unfortunately, Florida also leads the nation in deaths and injuries from lightning. Florida averages more than 10 deaths and 30 severe injuries each year. Approximately 50 percent of the deaths and injuries occur during recreational activities, with 40 percent of those being water related. The main hazards that thunderstorms produce are dangerous hail, tornadoes, and lightning.

Thunderstorms are very unpredictable and can pop up at any time here in Southwest Florida. Also, remember that tornadoes can form in areas of severe development. Here are some common sense measures that you can take to protect yourself:

Protective Actions to Take During a Thunderstorm:

1. Stay indoors unless it is absolutely necessary.
2. Don't use the telephone. Lightning can travel through telephone lines.
3. Unplug all major appliances from the wall.
4. If there is a power outage, turn off all electrical switches and appliances before power comes back on. This will prevent damage to appliances if there is a power surge.
5. Be alert for high winds, lightning, and possible tornadoes. Monitor your portable radio.
6. Golfers should immediately leave the golf course.
7. Don't take a shower or bath. Lightning can travel through the pipes.
8. Get out of the water and off the beaches.
9. Stay in your automobile if you are traveling.
10. Use caution when driving.
11. Avoid standing under trees or near poles.
12. Never touch downed power lines. Dial 9-1-1 or the local power company immediately to ensure that the line is turned off so that repairs can be made.