



# Thunderstorms

The Weather Channel

kids!

A thunderstorm has rain, thunder and lightning and while thunder won't hurt you - lightning will! It's important to pay attention when you see dark clouds gathering and if you hear thunder. Thunderstorms happen in every state in the nation and every thunderstorm has lightning. Along with lightning, heavy rain from thunderstorms can lead to flash flooding. Strong winds, hail, and tornadoes are also dangers associated with some thunderstorms.

Most thunderstorms occur in the spring and summer, usually during the afternoon and evening hours. Still they can occur year-round and at all hours of the day or night. Along the Gulf Coast and across the southeastern and western states, most thunderstorms occur during the afternoon. Thunderstorms often occur in the late afternoon and at night in the Plains states. Thunder and lightning can sometimes even come with a snowstorm!



## What to do

### How To Spot A Thunderstorm

Look for darkening skies, flashes of light or increasing wind. Clouds will sometimes stack up in a tower when you are high up in the mountains.

Listen for the sound of thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.

You can tell how many miles a thunderstorm is from you by counting the number of seconds between the flash of lightning and the clap of thunder. Divide the number of seconds by five to get the distance in miles. The lightning is seen before the thunder is heard because light travels faster than sound.

### What to Do During A Thunderstorm

#### Outside:

Tell your parents to find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.

If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.

If you are out with your parents boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter right away!

If you can go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles or metal objects. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.

Become a very small target! Squat low to the ground; place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible.

Do not lie flat on the ground - this will make you a larger target!

#### Inside:

Stay off the phone. Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity.

Do not use any electrical appliances including your computer.

Do not take a bath or shower during a thunderstorm.