**Thunderstorms and Lightning**

**What is a Thunderstorm?**

Thunderstorms are generated by temperature imbalances in the atmosphere. Warming of the air near the earth's surface and/or cooling of the air above the earth’s surface puts warmer, lighter air layers below colder, denser layers. The result is an unstable air mass that produces a thunderstorm.

**What is Lightning?**

Lightning is a powerful natural electrostatic discharge produced during a thunderstorm.

**Lightning is a serious hazard during thunderstorms and tornadoes. More people die from Lightning strikes than any other storm related incidents.**

**Precautions if you are threatened by lightning**

Take these special precautions if you are threatened by lighting:

* When a thunderstorm threatens, get inside a home or large building or inside an all-metal vehicle, not a convertible.

**INSIDE A HOME**

* Avoid using the telephone, except for emergencies.
* Avoid places which may hold water such as sinks, tubs and showers.

**OUTSIDE**

If you have no time to reach a safe building or an automobile, follow these rules:

* Do not stand underneath a natural lightning rod such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
* Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape, as you would do if you were standing on a hilltop, in an open field, on the beach or fishing from a small boat.
* Get out of and away from open water.
* Get away from tractors and other metal farm equipment.
* Get off of and away from motorcycles, scooters, golf carts and bicycles, and put down golf clubs.
* Stay away from wire fences, clothes lines, metal pipes, rails, and other metallic paths which could carry lightning to you from some distance away.
* Avoid standing in small isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
* In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.
* In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
* If you are isolated in a level field, and you feel your hair stand on end, drop to your knees and bend forward putting your hands on your knees. *Do not lie flat on the ground.*

The National Weather Service is responsible for issuing severe weather watches, warnings and advisories to alert the public.

For more information, please visit: [www.nws.noaa.gov/severeweather/index.shtml](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/severeweather/index.shtml) and [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov)