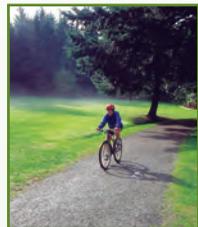


SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Play it safe

Outdoors, we are vulnerable to severe weather conditions. This is particularly true out in nature or in open areas. When enjoying outdoor sports or activities like camping, hiking, water sports, team sports, fishing, climbing, biking or even walking, we need to know the weather forecast and be aware of the possibility of a storm developing. We should also be able to recognize the early signs of bad weather and know how to protect ourselves. As a general rule, if the sky darkens suddenly, one should seek shelter as soon as possible.



Lightning is the most common danger associated with storms. Lightning is an electrical discharge that can reach 10 000 amperes, striking the ground at about 40 000 km a second. It always seeks the easiest path to the ground. As soon as you see lightning or hear thunder you should find shelter. Storms also generate very strong winds, hail, heavy rain, and sometimes even tornadoes.

To be safe outdoors, you must be familiar with your immediate environment and the surrounding area. For example, by marking appropriate locations to take cover, you will be able to find shelter fast if the sky darkens and you notice thunder and lightning. Do not forget that a storm can develop very quickly and you need to be able to take cover in as little as 30 minutes.

Practical advice in case of bad weather

Storm, lightning, strong winds, hail, tornado

- If you are in a tent or camper, take cover in a building such as a comfort station, washroom or community hall, or get into a hardtop vehicle.
- If there is no building close by, crouch down in a ditch or other low-lying area and cover your head with your arms.
- In the event of a tornado, leave your car immediately as the violent wind could easily flip it over. If there is no sturdy building nearby to protect you, lie flat in a ditch, ravine or other depressed area, and protect your head with your arms. Beware of flying debris.
- If you are in the water or on a boat, head for shore at the first sign of bad weather and take cover.
- Wait for 30 minutes after the storm has passed before returning to an open area or to the water.

Heavy rain, flash flooding

- Do not camp too close to streams or rivers because heavy rain may cause a rapid rise in the water level.
- Never cross flooded streams or rivers because the undercurrents can carry you downstream.
- In the event of a flash flood, head to higher ground immediately.

Learn to be safe

To better enjoy outdoor activities and to be able to protect yourself, you should keep abreast of the latest weather reports and warnings in effect issued by Environment Canada. Various tools also provide access to this information at any time, anywhere, even along your route.

The weather forecast and warnings from Environment Canada are available 24/7 on its **weather website www.weatheroffice.gc.ca**, where you can subscribe to the **RSS service**. In addition to being available from the local media, local weather conditions may be obtained using a hotline for **recorded information** in your area. You can also be in touch with an Environment Canada expert seven days a week at the weather consultation service **Weather One-on-One: 1-900-565-5555** (charges apply).

The **Weatheradio Canada** network broadcasts continuous weather reports on seven VHF frequencies at 162 MHz. The signal can be picked up by Weatheradio receivers, which are available for purchase from several retailers in Canada. At selected locations, low power broadcasts are transmitted on the regular FM or AM band. A Weatheradio receiver is not required to hear these broadcasts. For more information on Weatheradio, visit: www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=792F2D20-1.

For more information on hazardous weather conditions and how to protect yourself, visit the Environment Canada website: www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=15E59C08-1.

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