

# AN OUTDOOR SAFETY BULLETIN

Outdoor activities are gearing up! Now's a good time to think about how you can make outdoor activities safer for you and your family. A summary of precautions and safety tips for swimming, canoeing, and stormy weather follow. For more details, please visit the source web sites listed below each section.

## SWIMMING POOL SAFETY TIPS



Every year, hundreds of children drown in swimming pools and kiddie pools. A child can drown in as little as a few centimeters (1 inch) of water. Think about these tips to keep your family safe:

- Never leave a child alone in or near a pool even for a moment. A CPR-trained adult should supervise children at all times. Take a course on pool safety, first aid, and lifesaving skills.
- A child under age 3 or any child who cannot swim must wear a life vest; a child age 5 and younger should stay within an arm's length of an adult at all times.
- Send children to swimming and water safety lessons, but remember teaching your child to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in the water. Supervision is recommended at all times.
- Install a 4' fence around all four sides of a pool; use self-closing, self-latching gates set higher than a child's reach.
- Keep rescue equipment, such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver, close to the pool; a first aid kit and telephone should be handy; post emergency telephone numbers nearby.
- Do not use air-filled "swimming aids" as a substitute for approved life vests.
- Remove toys from the pool so a child is not tempted to reach for them; secure pool area gates; move toys, garden furniture, etc., away from the pool fence so a child doesn't climb these to get into the pool.
- Install a power safety cover that meets ASTM standards – it may add to the protection of your child but should not be used in place of the fence between your house & pool.

*From: National Weather Service NOAA, Office of Climate, Water, & Weather Services, 1325 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. For more information and safety tips, visit <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/overview.htm>*



## CANOE SAFETY TIPS

Fox Chase Lake is perfect for canoeing! Before you go out this summer, here are a few tips on safe canoeing:

- To get into your canoe, have someone hold it steady so it doesn't tip over; crouch low keeping your knees bent, grab the sides for balance, walk to your seat along the center to keep the canoe from rocking.
- Always sit on the seats or in the center of the canoe; sitting on the side can make it unstable.
- While in the canoe, stay low; do not stand or walk around; avoid sudden or jerky movements; don't rock from side to side.

*Canoe Safety Tips continued...*

- ALWAYS wear a life jacket - you never know when you might fall overboard unexpectedly.
- Be aware of lake currents & paddle towards the shore if you are floating further than you planned to; always keep your canoe at a right angle to waves.
- Stay away from low hanging trees or branches near the shoreline.
- Do not canoe in bad weather.
- If you tip over, DON'T PANIC; stay with your canoe, paddle or push your canoe to the shore; in shallow water, flip the canoe to dump the water & climb in - normally, canoes float even when full of water.
- Always bring extra clothing stored in a waterproof container in case you do get wet.
- Bring the proper equipment - sun protection (hats, sun screen, long sleeves & pants), first aid kit, food & water, life vests; secure or tie your equipment – the center beam can be a good place.
- Secure your canoe - lock it to help prevent unauthorized use or hazards to others.
- Remember, after a great day on the water carry out everything you bring in – DO NOT LITTER! Animals don't like a messy home either.

*From: Environmental Education for Kids (EEK!), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. For more information and safety tips, visit <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/Org/caer/ce/eeek/nature/camp/canoeSafety.htm>.*

## STORM AND LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS



NOAA National Weather Service calls Lightning “The Underrated Killer”. On average, over 300 people are struck a year, with about 62 people dying. Here are a few tips to keep you safe while outside:

- Watch for developing thunderstorms - as the sun heats the air, warmer air rises, cumulus clouds can form, growing into towering cumulus clouds – the first sign of a storm.
- As the storm approaches - seek safe shelter such as a large building or enclosed vehicle. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from an area where it is raining – about the distance you can hear a clap of thunder; so remember, if you HEAR thunder, you are within striking distance, seek shelter!
- Minimize your risk outdoors in the summer - most lightning deaths occur in summer; adults should take the lead in outdoor activities & stop activities at the first roar of thunder; make sure everyone has time to get to a large building or enclosed vehicle; have a plan prepared in case of a storm.
- During a storm, while indoors avoid talking on corded telephones, using computers, & other electrical equipment that puts you in direct contact with electricity; stay away from pools, indoor or outdoor tubs, showers, & other plumbing; use surge suppressors on key equipment; install ground fault protectors on circuits near water or outdoors; stay inside until at least 30 minutes after the last strike.
- If someone is struck by Lightning, call 911 immediately & get medical care - common effects: cardiac arrest & irregularities, burns, nerve damage; with proper treatment, including CPR, most victims can survive a strike; when helping a victim, you are not in danger of that charge affecting you.
- LIGHTNING IS DANGEROUS – at the first clap of thunder, seek shelter immediately – a large building or fully enclosed vehicle; wait 30 minutes after the last strike before going outside.

As NOAA says, “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”

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