



Opinion Editorial

SAMPLE OP-ED

Be a Force of Nature against one of the top storm-related killers

Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 24 – 30

This week is the 12th Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Since the campaign began, the average number of lightning deaths in the U.S. has decreased from 73 to 54. That's great progress, but lightning continues to be one of the top storm-related killers in the United States. In addition, lightning injures many more people than it kills and leaves some victims with life-long health problems. *[Here, make note of significant storms and lightning that occurred in your region. Or In the United States, there are about 25 million lightning flashes every year. Each of those 25 million flashes is a potential killer.]*

Understanding the dangers of lightning is important so you can get to a safe place when thunderstorms threaten. If you hear thunder--even a distant rumble or a crackling aloft--you are already in danger of becoming a lightning victim. Severe weather knows no boundaries and affects every individual but that does not mean we wave the white flag and bow to nature's whim. It means now is the time for bold preparedness actions.

NOAA's National Weather Service and its partners are doing just that by highlighting the importance of lightning safety awareness this severe weather season and calling on you to "*Be a Force of Nature.*" Knowing your risk, taking action, and being an example are just a few steps you can take to be better prepared and assist in saving lives.

For example, *[include a couple examples of local people, businesses, or communities that have taken steps to mitigate lightning risk and/or injury].*

Join us in becoming "A Force of Nature," and follow these steps to increase your lightning safety.

Know your risk: The best way to protect yourself from lightning is to avoid the threat. You simply don't want to be caught outside in a storm. Check the weather forecast regularly, sign up for local alerts from emergency management officials, and get a NOAA Weather Radio.

Take action: When thunder roars, go indoors! Have a lightning safety plan, and cancel or postpone activities early if thunderstorms are expected. Get to a safe place before the weather becomes threatening. Substantial buildings and hard-topped vehicles are safe options. Rain shelters, small sheds, and open vehicles are NOT safe. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after the last

thunder clap. Once indoors, do not use corded phones and don't touch plumbing, and electrical equipment such as computers and kitchen appliances.

Be a force of nature: Building a Weather-Ready Nation requires the action of each and every one of us. Once you have taken action, tell your family, friends, school staff, and co-workers about how they can avoid the danger of lightning. Studies show that individuals need to receive messages a number of ways before acting – be one of those sources. Social media provides is a good way to model preparedness actions for others.

Learn more at [NOAA's Lightning Safety site](#) and [Weather-Ready Nation](#) and encourage the rest of your community to Be a Force of Nature.