Make Safety a Priority this Summer

*IEMA encourages families to prepare for extreme heat, severe weather, and more*

SPRINGFIELD – As the end of the school year approaches, and families begin to plan their annual summer vacations, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency is reminding Illinois residents that with the right tools and a little preparation, summertime can be safe, fun, and relaxing.

Each year in the U.S., an average of 37 children die from heatstroke after being left in locked cars. Heat can be more severe on children because their bodies warm at a faster rate than adults. Parents should develop a routine that will ensure the backseat is always checked before the car is locked, such as putting a purse, cell phone or other needed item in the back seat or consider opening the car’s back door every time the car is parked.

Summer’s extreme heat can also lead to heat-induced illnesses, including heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Remember to check in on family, friends, neighbors, the elderly and pets to ensure they are safe. When extreme heat strikes, limit your time outdoors, seek air conditioning and drink plenty of water. If your home does not have air conditioning, you should familiarize yourself with your community’s cooling centers.

Warmer temperatures also bring an additional threat for severe weather. The month of June is home to National Lightning Safety Awareness Week. This is a great time for families to learn how to reduce their risk while enjoying the great outdoors. Remember, if you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. Seek shelter as quickly as possible because no place outside is safe when a thunderstorm strikes.

The best way to protect you and your family is to monitor the weather when planning or attending outdoor events. It is critical for people to have multiple ways to receive notifications and updated information about severe weather warnings.
“Whether you’re relaxing by the pool, taking in a ballgame, or traveling away from home, severe weather can strike at any time so it is important that you are aware of your surroundings,” said Acting Director William Robertson. “There are a variety of ways you can be alerted to critical, lifesaving information, no matter where you may be – including: NOAA weather radios, weather apps for your smart phone, television and radio broadcasts, the internet, and outdoor warning sirens.”

For more information on how to plan and prepare for an emergency, including a list of state and local resources, check out our website at www.ready.illinois.gov.

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