

Thunderstorm emergencies: practise

These activities give the children the opportunity to practise what they could do before and during a thunderstorm emergency to ensure they are safe throughout. We recommend that before you start these activities you go through some of the activities in the 'Coping skills' module with the children, as some knowledge on these is required in the following activities.

Activities can be worked through in order. You can do all activities, or you can pick and choose. If you are short on time, you could pick the following activities:

1. That's cool
- and
1. Thunderstorm preparedness interactive film
- and
2. Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity **or** Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise

Learning objectives

By the end of the 'Thunderstorm emergencies: practise' activities children will be able to:

- > Practise some of the most effective ways to stay safe during a severe thunderstorm, and manage potential risks.

Practise activity summary

Time	Activity name	Supporting resources
5 minutes	That's cool	Which of these actions is cool in a thunderstorm emergency? Thunderstorm checklist
15minutes	Thunderstorm preparedness interactive film	Thunderstorm interactive film
20 minutes	Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity	Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers Thunderstorm checklist
20 minutes	Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise	Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers Thunderstorm checklist

1. That's cool

Activity type



Practise

Suggested time



5 minutes

Suggested group size



Whole group

What you need

1. ['Which of these actions is cool in a thunderstorm emergency?' presentation](#)
2. [Thunderstorm checklist](#)

Introduction

This activity helps consolidate the children's knowledge of what they should or should not do during a thunderstorm. This is based on the 'Thunderstorm checklist' resource.

Activity description

Before the activity:

1. Show the 'Which of these actions is cool in a thunderstorm emergency?' presentation.
2. Print out the 'Which of these actions is cool in a thunderstorm emergency?' presentation with notes and follow the instructions below.
3. Print out a copy of the 'Thunderstorm checklist' for your reference.

Explain that:

- > We are going to take part in an activity called 'That's cool' to test our knowledge of what we should or should not do during a thunderstorm emergency.
- > Firstly, listen to the description of an action someone might take during a thunderstorm emergency. Then if the action is safe, give a thumbs up and say "That's cool!" If the action is unsafe, give a thumbs down and say "No way!"

Work through each slide, calling out each action description and helping children come to the right conclusion. A thumbs up or down will appear on the slide and more detail on the answers is included in the slide notes.

2. Thunderstorm preparedness interactive film

Activity type



Practise

Suggested time



15 minutes

Suggested group size



Whole group

What you need

1. [Thunderstorm interactive film](#)

Introduction

This activity gives children the opportunity to practise what they might do in a thunderstorm emergency using an engaging interactive film hosted on YouTube.

Activity description

Before the activity:

1. Have the film ready to play from the link in the 'What you need' side bar. Please note: you will not be able to access the film without this link.

After each scene the children will be asked a question by a character in the film. The answer options will appear on the screen. We recommend you pause the film with the options on the screen and have a class discussion to decide which answer to click on. If an incorrect answer is selected, a screen will come up with the reason why this answer is wrong and with a suggestion of what should be done instead. The film will then continue to the next scene, where children can make another class decision and so on until the end of the film.

Explain that:

- > We are going to watch a short film about some friends who are being affected by a thunderstorm.
- > After each scene you will be asked a question that you can answer by choosing one of two options that appear on the screen.
- > If you get it wrong, a screen will come up saying this and suggesting what the correct answer is. Then the film will continue to the next scene.

Start the film. A short amount of time has been added after the options appear on the screen to allow time for class discussion. However, if you would like to discuss the options with the class for longer than the allotted answering time, we recommend that you pause the film.

After children have watched the whole film, ask them how the characters were feeling and what helped them stay calm. Discuss what the children have learnt about how to prepare for and what actions to take during a thunderstorm.

3. Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity

Activity type



Practise

Suggested time



20 minutes

Suggested group size



Pairs

What you need

1. [Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity](#)
2. [Thunderstorm checklist](#)
3. [Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers](#)

Introduction

This activity gives children the opportunity to practise what they might do in a thunderstorm emergency situation using role play.

Activity description

Before the activity:

1. Print and cut out several copies of the two scenario cards from the 'Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity'. You will need a copy of one of the scenario cards for each pair of pupils.
2. Print out a copy of the 'Thunderstorm checklist' and the 'Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers' for your reference.

Divide the children into pairs and give each pair one of the scenario cards. Explain that:

- > An important part of being prepared for an emergency is to practise what you could do in an emergency situation.
- > In your pairs use the scenario card to create a short role play about how you could respond to the situation. Think about what you have learnt about the ways to stay safe and cope during thunderstorms.
- > Before you start creating your role plays, let's read through both scenarios together.

Read through both scenarios with the class. If children need some ideas, you could refer to the 'Thunderstorm checklist' and the 'Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers'.

If time permits, ask some pairs to perform their scenes to the rest of the group. Then lead a whole group discussion to decide on the best way to handle the two different scenarios.

4. Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise

Activity type



Practise

Suggested time



20 minutes

Suggested group size



Small groups

What you need

1. [Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet](#)
2. [Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet](#)
3. [Thunderstorm checklist](#)
4. [Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers](#)

Introduction

This scenario-based exercise helps children explore how they might respond to a developing thunderstorm emergency.

Activity description

Before the activity:

1. Print out copies of the 'Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet' (cut out the boxes on this sheet) and the 'Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet'.
2. Print out a copy of the 'Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers' and the 'Thunderstorm checklist' for your reference. You may also wish to give copies of the factsheet to the children so they can refer to it throughout this activity.

Ask the children to get into small groups and give each group a 'Thunderstorm preparedness: scenario exercise answer sheet.' Explain that:

- > An important part of being prepared for an emergency is to practise what you would do in an emergency situation.
- > In a moment each group will be given a scenario. We will read it through together and then in your groups, you will discuss and write down any actions you might take to respond safely to the situation.

Read the initial scenario through with them.

- > You have three minutes to note down on the answer sheet all the things you might need to do right now to make sure you and your friends are safe. When you hear "Stop", we are going to stop discussing the scenario as groups and share some of the actions you might take with the whole class.

If the children need suggestions, refer to the 'Thunderstorm checklist' or the 'Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers'. Call out "Stop" when three minutes is up and ask each group to share some actions. Use the suggested answers in the 'Thunderstorm preparedness activity: scenario exercise' instruction sheet to help children develop their answers.

Continue the activity by handing each group the 'Scenario development one' cut-out and read this through with them. Then explain that:

- > You have another three minutes to note down on the answer sheet all the things you might need to do right now to make sure you and your friends are safe. Once again, when you hear "Stop", we are going to stop discussing the scenario as groups and share some of the actions you might take with the whole class.

Call out "Stop" when three minutes is up and ask each group to share some actions. Use the suggested answers in the 'Thunderstorm preparedness activity scenario exercise instruction sheet' to help develop children's answers and knowledge.

Continue the activity by handing out a 'Scenario development two' cut-out to each group, giving the children three minutes to discuss it, and then opening up the discussion with the class.

Summarise their preparedness learning at the end of the activity.

Thunderstorm factsheet for teachers

Why, when and where do thunderstorms happen?

- > Thunderstorms can happen anywhere and at any time when the conditions are right – it is estimated that there are more than 2,000 thunderstorms happening at any given moment in the world. Here in the UK they are most likely to occur in the spring and summer due to warm weather and changes in temperatures.
- > Thunderstorms happen when warm air from the Earth rises and meets much colder air higher up in the atmosphere, causing a large cloud to form as it fills with warm, moist air. When the cloud has grown in height, the air at the top cools and the moisture in the air condenses into water droplets that accumulate and eventually fall as rain or hail. When the water droplets freeze and move around each other in the cloud, they collect a negative charge, which builds up to ultimately be released as lightning.
- > Lightning is a gigantic spark of electricity that come from the clouds. It is very powerful and very dangerous.
- > Thunder is the sound of the air ‘exploding’ when a very hot bolt of lightning shoots down from the sky. Since thunder is caused only by lightning, all thunderstorms have lightning. If you hear thunder, lightning will be close by, so it is best to immediately seek safe shelter indoors.
- > Thunderstorms can bring heavy rains that may cause flash floods, as well as strong winds and hail that can damage buildings and vehicles. But their most common threat is lightning, which can electrocute or severely burn a person and can also cause fires.
- > We see lightning before we hear thunder because the light from a lightning bolt travels much faster than the sound of thunder. It takes less than a second for light to travel a mile but it takes thunder five seconds to travel a mile. By counting the seconds from the time you see lightning until the time you hear thunder, and dividing by five, you can estimate how far away the lightning is.
- > Lightning can sometimes cause power-cuts if it strikes electrical equipment. Power-cuts can also happen when lightning causes a tree or branch to fall on to power lines, causing the electrical system to shut down.

Staying safe

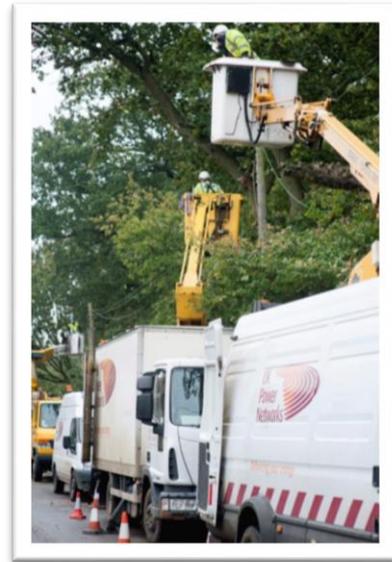
When you hear the thunderstorm start, take shelter immediately and stay there until 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder. You can use this helpful saying as a reminder: **When thunder roars, stay indoors!**

- > If you hear thunder when you are swimming or paddling, get out of the water immediately and go inside.
- > If you are in an open outdoor space, like a football pitch, quickly find a place to go inside.
- > If you are in a car during a thunderstorm, stay inside it with your hands in your lap, so you do not touch anything metal that could conduct the lightning.
- > Do not use a phone or computer that is plugged in, because the electricity in lightning can travel into the home through the electrical wiring.
- > Stay away from taps, sinks, and bathtubs, because lightning has been known to come inside through home plumbing systems.
- > Stay away from windows and glass doors in case they break – broken glass can be very dangerous.
- > During a power cut, remain calm. The power companies will be working to restore power. In the meantime, protect your electrical appliances by switching them off and unplugging them.
- > To minimise food spoilage during an extended power-cut, eat refrigerated food first, frozen food next (within 2 days), and food from the cupboard last. But always remember this food safety rule: **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Thunderstorm checklist

Thunderstorms can happen anywhere and at any time when the conditions are right, especially in spring and summer. Share this checklist with your parents/guardians to help the family stay safe throughout a thunderstorm.

- Take shelter immediately when you hear a thunderstorm start and stay indoors until 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.
- Stay away from water throughout a thunderstorm. This includes taps, sinks and bathtubs.
- Do not use any electrical appliances that are plugged in, such as phones or computers.
- Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances.
- Stay away from windows and glass doors in case they break.
- Have a torch somewhere accessible in case there is a power-cut.
- To minimise food spoilage during an extended power-cut, eat refrigerated food first, frozen food next (within 2 days), and food from the cupboard last.
- If you are in a car during a thunderstorm, stay inside it and do not touch anything metal that could conduct lightning.



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Thunderstorm preparedness role play activity

Scenario A: A shopping trip emergency

Nicky and his mum were on the way to the supermarket when it started raining really hard. As they pulled into the car park, they heard hail rattling on the roof of their car. Then, BOOM! A huge clap of thunder sounded overhead. Nicky looked around while his mum pulled into a parking space. He saw a giant streak of lightning in the sky behind the supermarket. Then, BOOM! Another huge clap of thunder. Nicky and his mum were parked close to the supermarket, and the hail had stopped.

What should Nicky and his mum do to stay safe in this thunderstorm?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after the role-play performances, if not already covered):

- > Nicky and his mum would be safest inside the car, with their hands in their laps so that they do not touch anything metal.
- > They should stay there until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder. The lightning is too close for them to step outside the car and try to run for the supermarket. Also, Nicky's mum might touch something metal in the car if she tries to drive away.

Scenario B: I don't like thunder

Zainab was scared of thunder. Sometimes when there was a thunderstorm at night, Zainab would lie in bed with eyes wide open, afraid about having bad dreams after falling asleep. That's what happened when Zainab was sleeping over at cousin Aisha's house – Zainab was too scared to go to sleep. Luckily, Aisha had learnt a lot about thunderstorms and lightning from the Pillowcase Project.

What can Aisha share with Zainab about how they can stay safe and be prepared during a thunderstorm or power-cut? What could Aisha teach Zainab to help her stay calm and cope with thoughts and feelings about what might happen during a thunderstorm?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after the role-play performances, if not already covered):

- > Taking slow breaths to calm down when you feel worried or scared.
- > Sticking with a friend or family member so you don't feel alone.
- > Singing a favourite song, remembering a favourite story or imagining a place you like to go to could make you feel better.
- > Doing a coping skill learnt during the Pillowcase Project.
- > Reminding yourself of what you have done to get through tough situations in the past.
- > Picturing your 'Shield of strength' to remind yourself that you have the confidence, skills and qualities to cope.
- > Remembering that you have learnt how to stay safe during a thunderstorm by going indoors and staying there until the storm has passed.
- > Listening to grown-ups for other ways to help each other feel safe.

Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet

Initial scenario

It is early Saturday evening at the beginning of the summer holidays. You are at a friend's birthday party, playing party games in the pool in their garden. Suddenly, you hear thunder in the distance. You cannot see the lightning that comes after thunder, which makes you think it is not close yet.

What do you do now?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > Get out of the pool immediately after you hear a thunderstorm starting. It is important to stay away from water as it can conduct electricity, which means if lightning strikes, it can be very dangerous.
- > Go into the house immediately and stay there until 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

Scenario development one

Everyone has moved into the house. It has now started hailing outside, and the thunder has become really loud. You can also hear the wind howling outside. You know from having participated in a project at school that there can sometimes be power-cuts during thunderstorms.

What should you and your friend's family do now?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > No one should use any electrical appliances that are plugged in, such as computers or phones. All electrical appliances should be turned off and unplugged to make sure they do not break.
- > Make sure that no one is near any windows or glass doors in case the lightning and thunder cause them to break, which could be dangerous.
- > Get a torch ready in case there is a power-cut.

Scenario development two

The thunderstorm is still raging and it has become quite dark outside now. Your friend's mum is getting everyone to play a board game in the living room. Suddenly, the lights go out. You realise straight away that there has been a power-cut. Your best friend, who is also at the party, tells you they are scared of the dark and are worried about their mum coming to collect them in this storm.

What could you do now?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > Do some of the coping skills exercises you learnt in the Pillowcase Project with your friend to calm him/her down:
 - Breathing exercises to make sure they are taking slow, deep breaths, such as: 'Bubble breathing' or 'Breathing with colour'.
 - Visualisation exercises to make your friend think of something else so they feel less scared, such as: 'Shield of strength', 'Guided imagery' or 'My favourite place'.

Thunderstorm preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet

Initial scenario

It is early Saturday evening at the beginning of the summer holidays. You are at a friend's birthday party, playing party games in the pool in their garden. Suddenly, you hear thunder in the distance. You cannot see the lightning that comes after thunder, which makes you think it is not close yet.

What do you do now?

Scenario development one

Scenario development two

Well done for knowing what to do to stay safe!